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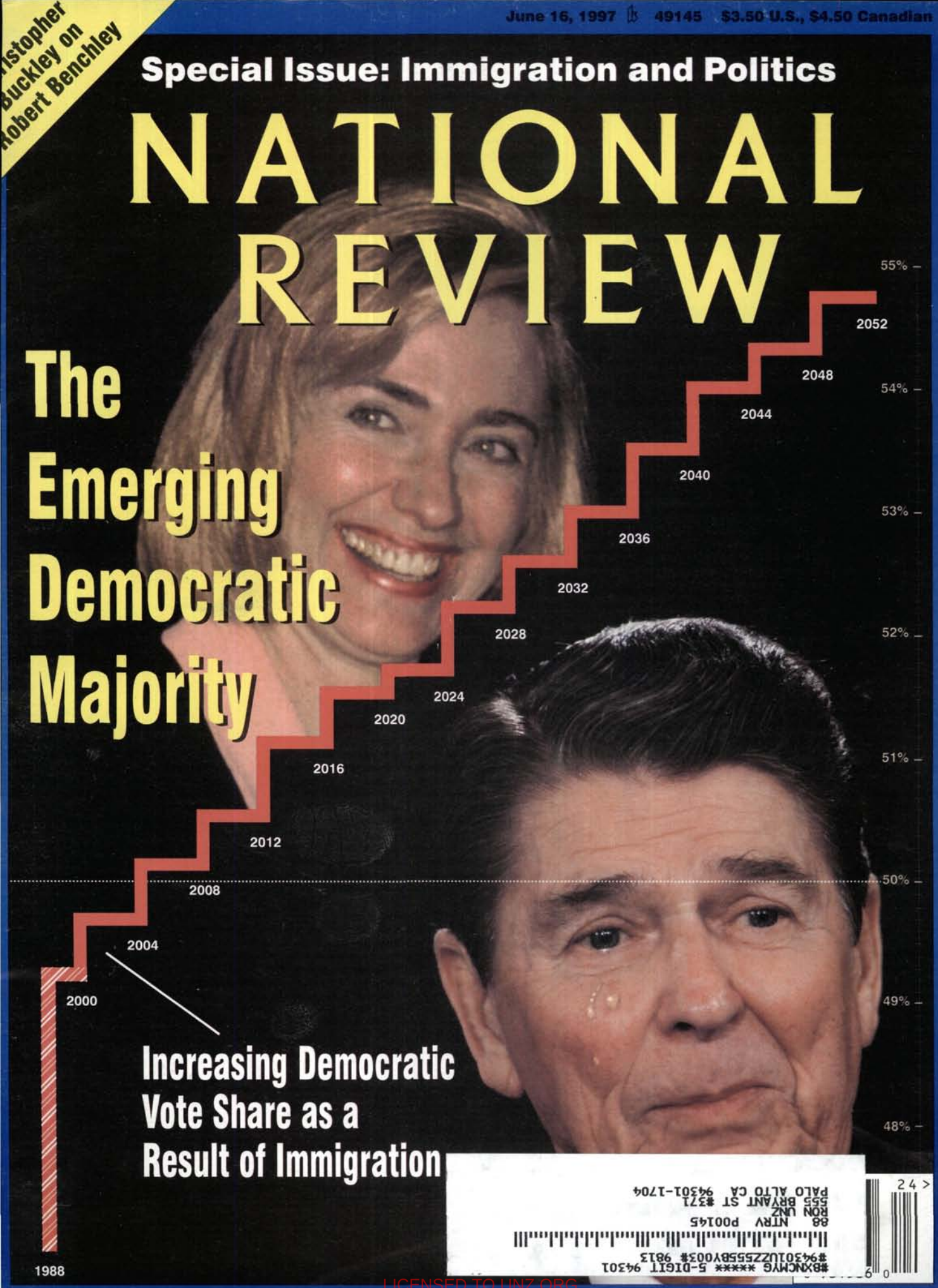
Robert Benchley

Special Issue: Immigration and Politics

NATIONAL REVIEW

The Emerging Democratic Majority



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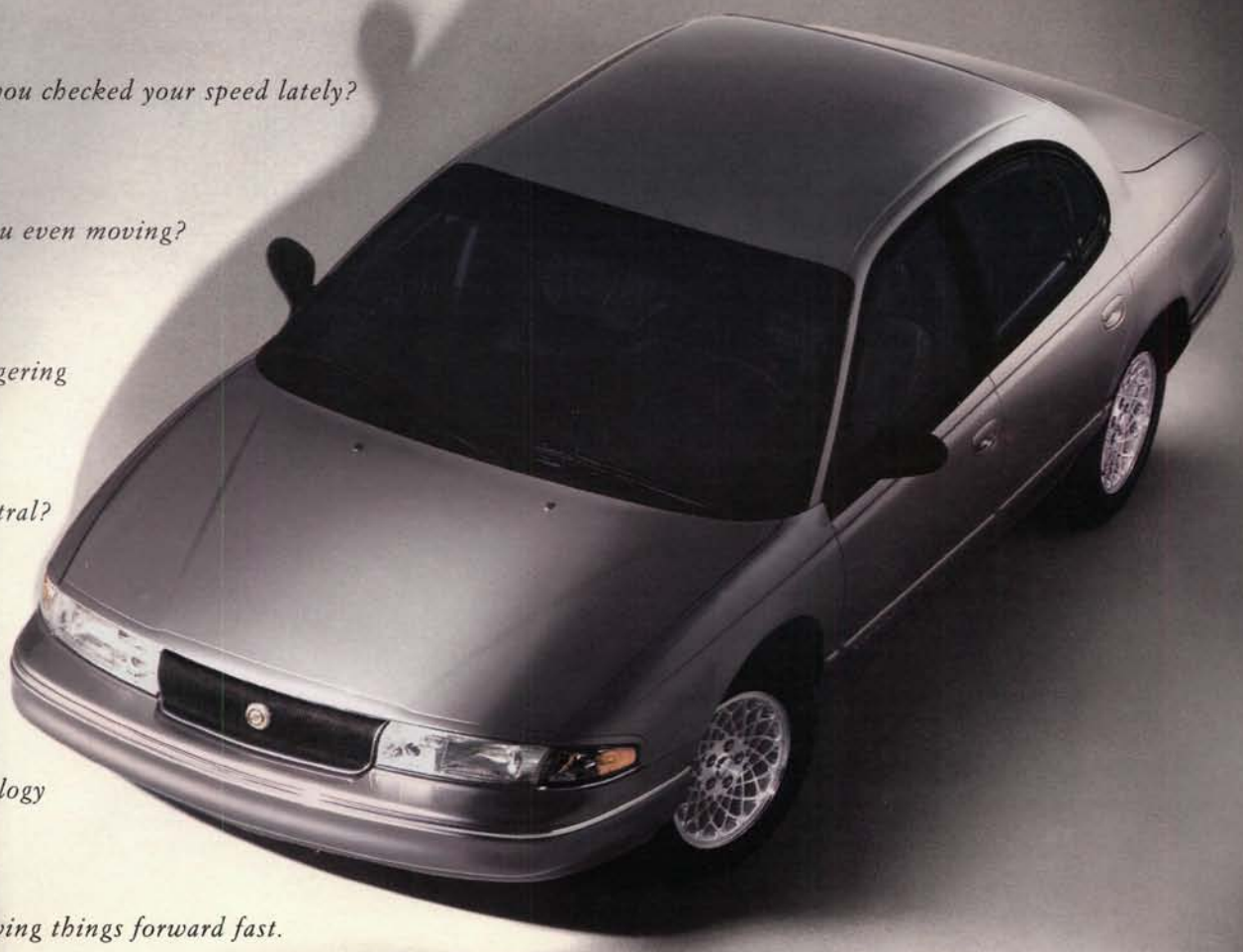

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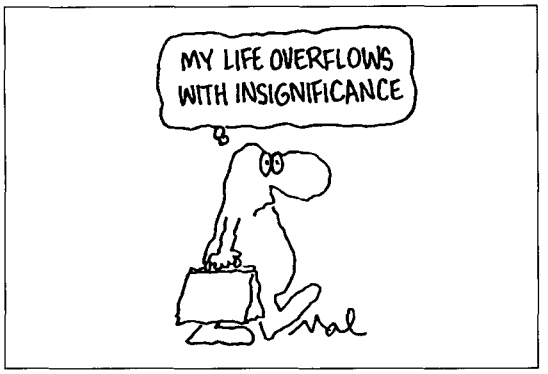

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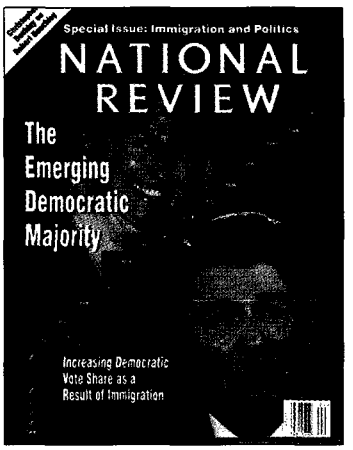
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LETTERS

No End to Insensitivity

The May 19 cover depicting Joe Camel with grotesque three-fingered hands, stereotypical garb, and an apparent condom is a disgusting insult not only to Animated-Americans, but to all Americans. Why a white T-shirt? Why black sunglasses? And, most offensive, why the long face?

Elvie Malcom
Augusta, Kan.

Mindful of Mindlessness

I am befuddled that so many Americans would permit the usurpation of their responsibilities of citizenship by the originators of the "grotesque buckteeth and stereotypical garb" letter-writing campaign ["Letters," May 5]. Tocqueville wrote that America would remain a true democracy only so long as its citizens fulfilled the awesome obligations of self-governance. Our electorate must be able to think logically, else we are subject to the emotional appeals of demagogues. In the words of Robert Maynard Hutchins: "Unless the citizen can master . . . the fundamental principles of a free society, he cannot function as a member of a free community . . . or help to keep it free." Let those who copied that sentence verbatim and signed their names to it wear the scarlet letter "A" for abnegation of citizenship.

Richard Roberts
Fairfax, Calif.

He Had It Coming

My condemnation of NATIONAL REVIEW for creating and disseminating the racist cover cartoon [March 24] stands. Each member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors supports my position. I am sorry that John O'Sullivan found himself in a threatening situation at Yale University ["From the Editor," May 5]. I do not advocate violence as a means of problem solving, and, unlike Mr. O'Sullivan, I do not find violent situations exhilarating. However, NATIONAL REVIEW brought this reaction upon itself by fomenting racial bigotry against Asian-Americans and Asians. You must take responsibility for any repercussions that result from the decisions you make. The first step toward accepting this responsibility is to acknowledge that the cover was insensitive and insulting.

Leland Y. Yee
Board of Supervisors
San Francisco, Calif.

Personal Opinions

Michael Novak's "Personally Opposed" [May 5] comes close to the truth regarding those who claim to be "personally opposed" to abortion but are politically pro-choice, yet fails to touch on the essential contradiction. The question for the "personally opposed" is: "*Why* are you personally opposed?" The obvious, and only, answer is that they believe abortion to be the taking of human life. Otherwise, it would have no greater moral import than an appendectomy.

Being personally opposed to abortion yet unwilling to outlaw it is akin to being personally opposed to slavery yet supporting the right of others to own slaves. This reasoning was fallacious in 1850 and is no less so now. Abortion is not a matter of taste. If abortion is what the "personally opposed" implicitly acknowledge it is—the taking of innocent human life—then in good conscience their opposition cannot be merely personal, but must extend to the public.

Andrew G. Biggs
Washington, D.C.

Conservatives are not the only ones to compare abortion to slavery. From the liberal point of view, *anti*-abortion laws are like slavery, forcing women to provide babies to men. Harvard professor Laurence Tribe has made the same analogy as Mr. Novak—that America cannot be half slave and half free. Messrs. Tribe and Novak both agree that America should not have a patchwork of different abortion laws throughout the states. Slavery was a moral issue, but also a regional one. An insistence on moral absolutism was a way to end the slavery issue because America could and did fight a war to resolve it. America will not fight a literal war over abortion, and so it will be resolved in the very way that Mr. Novak says it should not be—by different abortion laws across the country. If *Roe* v. *Wade* is reversed, some states will move to ban most abortions, others will not.

Many pro-lifers believe passionately in a constitutional amendment to ban abortion. It isn't going to happen. So they need to settle for the next best thing: a constitutional amendment to reverse *Roe* and return the abortion issue to the state legislatures.

Mark E. Dunlap
Harvester, Mo.

Offensiveness, PC Style

Your paragraph about gay sitcom star Ellen DeGeneres ["The Week," May 5] brings to mind what happened here in Birmingham when ABC aired its much-touted "coming-out" episode. The local ABC affiliate (33/40) refused to broadcast the episode, deeming it inappropriate for family viewing. (It had asked ABC for permission to air the episode in a later time slot, but ABC refused.) The station was reportedly the only one in the country not to air *Ellen* that night. ABC 33/40 and its manager came under fire from the PC crowd.

Miss DeGeneres, appearing on *Oprah* earlier that day, told viewers that a group of Birmingham residents had rented an auditorium to show the episode free of cost to anyone who wanted to come and that 2,100 tickets were requested in less than eight hours. Miss DeGeneres then commented to the effect that the only things that could attract such a crowd in Birmingham were tractor pulls and mud wrestling.

Miss DeGeneres's comments demonstrate the very closed-mindedness of which the politically correct accused the station.

A. David Fawal
Birmingham, Ala.

Better Late Than Never

While it may be unusual to criticize an article after forty years, I want to express my disappointment with Whittaker Chambers's review of *Atlas Shrugged* ["Big Sister Is Watching You," Dec. 28, 1957].

The book is fiction; the good people in it are shining heroes and the evil ones are terrible villains. Mr. Chambers purports that the heroes are Nietzsche's *Übermenschen*, and thus saddles the work with the sins of the totalitarians who followed Nietzsche's philosophy. In fact, what the book's heroes share is a philosophy that acknowledges and desires reality, and that demands that their own happiness be their highest moral purpose. Mr. Chambers's notion that this can only lead to hedonism is wrong and stems solely from a religious premise. Objectivism very specifically sees hedonism as a path divergent from long-term happiness.

Worst of all is the assertion that Miss Rand desired some form of totalitarianism. Her constant references to the initiation of force as the great evil leave no doubt that she wants nothing more than the destruction of "Big Sister." While the review is forty years old, conservatives' disdain for Ayn Rand's philosophy is alive and well. Conservatives should reconsider their opposition to a philosophy that rejects forced sacrifice of the productive for the needy, and instead holds hard work as a virtue.

John Cherniavsky
Claremont, Calif.

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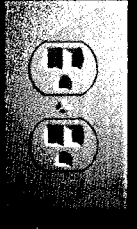

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FROM THE EDITOR

School Daze

■ It seems that President Clinton, concerned about damage from the family scandals, plans to boost his moral standing with a campaign in defense of racial preferences. Call it the defendant in defense of the indefensible.

One of his weapons is likely to be the reports that abolishing preferences in California and Texas has caused a sharp fall in the number of black and Hispanic students admitted to the best schools. So here are some reflections unlikely to be expressed by our President:

First, these reports entirely disprove the earlier claims that racial preferences did not discriminate against white and Asian students. Plainly the college administrators who made such claims were lying through their teeth.

Second, the condition of America's public schools (which is significantly responsible for the poor academic achievement of minority children) arises in part from the existence of racial preferences in higher education.

In the past, even schools in poor areas were permeated by a culture of achievement—desks in a row, stern teachers, homework, punishment for idleness, etc. They had to be. If their students got bad grades and were not admitted to college, the school's reputation declined.

Racial preferences meant a reversal of this influence. It gave high schools permission to replace their tradition of achievement with a culture of entitlement. The schools responded and their pupils suffered, er, proportionately.

Restoring high standards in high schools will take time; but it will not even begin until the corrupting influence of racial preferences is removed.

Finally, those minority students who have not been admitted to the best schools—for instance, Berkeley—have not been sent into the outer darkness. There are many other good schools they can attend, and in California they are all but guaranteed a place in one.

Indeed, it is madness to establish racial proportionalism in university entrance as a test of a system's excellence. What really matters is how many students graduate with good marks. Many of those admitted to a rigorous school on racially rigged scores were subsequently so discouraged by the fierce competition that they either dropped out or merely scraped by.

Might they not have been far happier and more successful in a slightly less prestigious school? Indeed, might they not now be lawyers and doctors instead of dropouts? And if so, would not such useful happy lives be worth more than a cheerful statistic—especially a fake one?

■ In the small world of small magazines and think tanks, Thomas Sowell's latest column in *Forbes* is big news. For he takes a position on immigration very close to NATIONAL REVIEW's.

That—as the special section in this issue makes clear—is not an end to immigration but reforms to reduce its quantity and to improve its quality.

Reasonable enough, surely. But raising such questions at all is likely to invite accusations of racism, nativism, etc. from pro-immigration spokesmen who, as Mr. Sowell observes sardonically, talk loftily about "educating the public," which implies that "only the ignorant can possibly disagree with them."

Mr. Sowell, the leading conservative thinker on ethnicity and a useful man in an academic brawl, cannot be so dismissed. Nice to be on his side.

■ My bad-news award for the week goes to the entire media, but especially to the *New York Times*, for reporting the Kelly Flinn affair as if it were confined to a charge of adultery, glossing over Lt. Flinn's insubordination and lying to superior officers, and above all missing the real story, which is that the attempt to fashion a gender-sensitive military is leading the armed forces to abandon or soften one standard after another.

Did I write "missing the story"? Make that "looking for it very carefully in every direction except the obvious one."

—JOHN O'SULLIVAN

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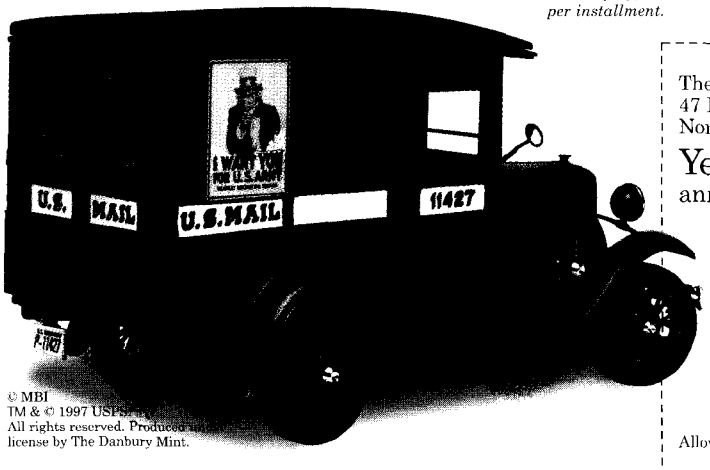

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FOR THE RECORD

■ Senate three votes shy of veto-proof majority to ban partial-birth abortion. The Rev. **Bill Hybels**, who spends an hour each month with Pres. **Clinton** "focused on his spiritual development," has sent Clinton three letters urging him to sign the bill. There are dissenters still: after American Medical Association endorses ban, *Philadelphia Daily News* editorializes that AMA "should take two Valium and get back to the golf course." Sen. **Joe Lieberman** (Conn.), formerly some conservatives' favorite Democrat, votes against ban. So do ten Democrats up for re-election in '98: **Boxer** (Calif.), **Bumpers** (Ark.), **Dodd** (Conn.), **Feingold** (Wisc.), **Graham** (Fla.), **Inouye** (Hawaii), **Mikulski** (Md.), **Moseley-Braun** (Ill.), **Murray** (Wash.), **Wyden** (Ore.). After misleading press accounts, **Bill Bennett** clarifies position: the ban should be passed, and then Congress should revisit alternative ban on late-term abortions proposed by Sen. **Daschle** (D., S.D.) . . . . Sens. **Hatch** (R., Utah) and **Kennedy** (D., Mass.) were defeated in attempt to attach health-insurance plan to budget agreement. Future tries likely to be more successful: bill will sail through Finance Committee with support of GOP Sens. **D'Amato** (N.Y.), **Jeffords** (Vt.), Hatch. Utah Republican Party adopts resolution condemning bill despite Hatch speech. . . . Sen. **Strom Thurmond** (R., S.C.), already the oldest senator ever at 94, becomes the longest-serving senator: "When I first came up here, we would get through the work in June or July. . . . Now we're here year-round. It might be better for the country if it was like it was before. The longer Congress stays in session, the more they find something to do."

■ **Jack Kemp** tells **Jesse Jackson**, "You and I both should run to protect the country from **Al Gore** in 2000." In Florida, Kemp criticizes last year's welfare reform for cutting off benefits to non-citizens. . . . *Washington Times*'s **Donald Lambro** reports that Gore was the critical player in deciding not to grant Texas Gov. **George W. Bush** a waiver from federal regulations to implement pro-privatization welfare reform. . . . *Business Week* reports the deep-in-debt DNC is "asking some political operatives to work on credit" and quotes one consultant: "If you want to be a player, you don't have a choice. But who knows if they're ever going to pay?" . . . **Rob Hood**, now a legislative assistant to **Newt Gingrich** dubbed "**Robin Hood**" by critics in property-rights movement, to be promoted to assistant to the Speaker.

■ In *Forbes*, **Thomas Sowell** denounces the use of "moral intimidation" by "pro-immigration spokesmen" and defends "limiting how many people can enter": "All over the world, immigrants who are part of a continuing stream of immigration from their homelands tend to remain foreign longer." . . . After "Old Sparky" burst into flames during March execution of **Pedro Medina**, Florida Supreme Court blocks further use of state's 74-year-old electric chair for at least four months. . . . **Paul Newman** on conservatives: "We just got rid of **Dornan** and now we get [Rep. **Dan**] **Burton**. They just keep popping out of rat holes." . . . Templeton Foundation awards **Milton Friedman (lifetime achievement) and Gertrude Himmelfarb** (outstanding contemporary book: *The De-moralization of Society*) $25,000 each, as part of "Honor Rolls" program. Also listed on rolls are colleges and professors. One finalist in outstanding contemporary books category: *Founding Father* by *NR*'s **Richard Brookhiser**.

Matt—Rothco

"I'm sorry, your honor, it's something I feel very strongly about."

■ Houston heart surgeon **Michael DeBakey** says Russian Pres. **Boris Yeltsin** is "in good shape" despite constant rumors and weak appearance. **Ekaterina Lakhova**, Yeltsin-appointed chairman of a commission on women, family, and demography, says Russian birthrate, at 8.9 per thousand, is still falling; death rate of 14.3 per thousand means annual population loss of 800,000—a world peacetime record. The main culprit: rising alcohol consumption. Men die 14 years earlier than women, drinking on average 13 liters of pure alcohol each year. . . . With internationally backed Clinton plan to modernize Haiti's economy at stake, U.S., UN, and other diplomats forced a postponement of senate elections after it became evident they were rigged by former Pres. **Jean-Bertrand Aristide**'s Lavalas Family party, which opposes the program. . . . Israeli ambassador to U.S., **Eliyahu Ben-Elissar**, a hard-liner whose outspokenness has rubbed State Dept. the wrong way, beats off attempt to unseat him. Proposed replacement **Dore Gold**, a U.S. emigrant to Israel and Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu**'s principal foreign-policy advisor, instead goes to UN. . . . Lost in commentary about *San Jose Mercury News*'s apology for implicating CIA in drug-running for the Nicaraguan contras: The Left initially made the charges to counter considerable evidence accumulated by **Bill Casey**'s CIA that the Sandinistas had run drugs through Cuba. . . . Mexico's central bank pumps cash into economy to help Pres. **Ernesto Zedillo** win mid-term elections in July, which threaten to install left-wing populist **Cuauhtemoc Cardenas** as Mexico City's first elected mayor and No. 2 politician in country. . . . Singapore's Chief Justice **Yong Pung How** rejects appeal of 16-year-old boy of a two-year sentence in juvenile home for carrying cigarettes, forbidden to anyone under 18.

■ *U.S. News* wakes up to the Fighting Nun (see *NR*'s 40th anniversary issue, p. 113) and other nun toys. Says Fighting Nun marketer **Mark Pahlow**: "Baby-boomers who went to Catholic school love them. Protestants are intrigued by the ritual. Gen-Xers like the dark clothing. So it's all come together."

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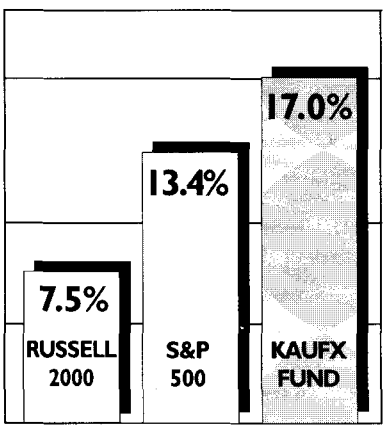

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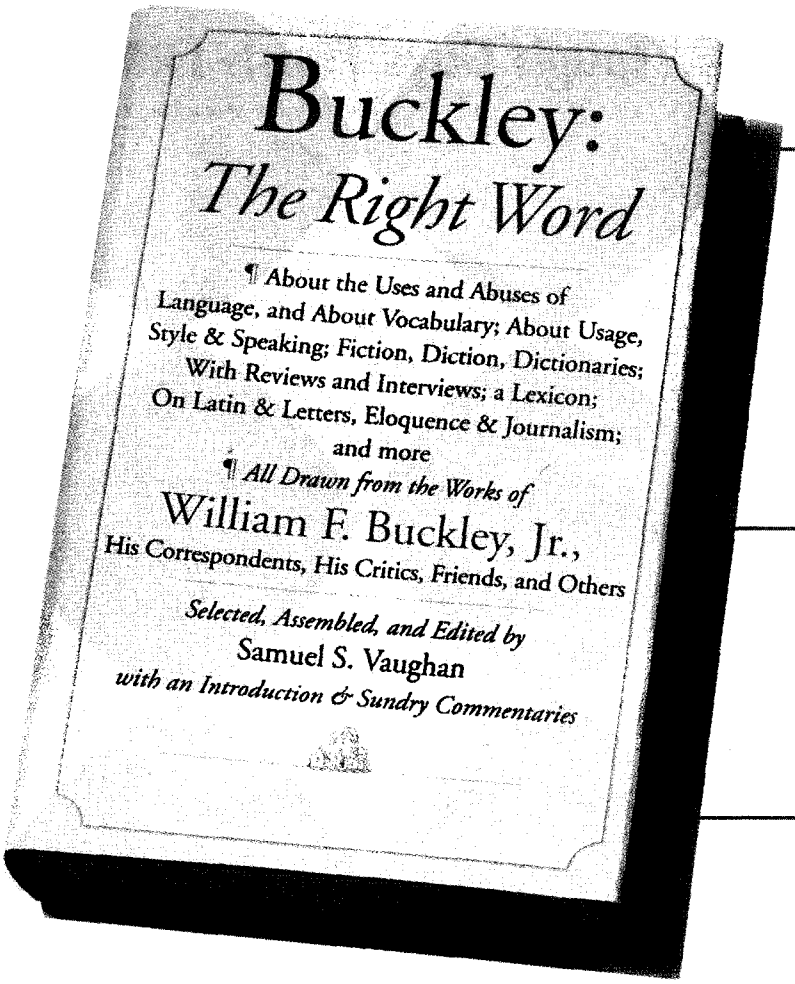
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THE WEEK

■ Rumor had it that Lt. Kelly Flinn, had she not accepted a less-than-honorable discharge, would have been reassigned to serve on Air Force One. But it was all denied by the *Washington Times*.

■ In a 9 to 0 ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court held that the Constitution does not grant President Clinton civil immunity from allegations of personal misconduct occurring while he was governor; that it does not grant him a delay in the litigation until after he leaves office; and therefore that Paula Corbin Jones has a right to pursue her claims in a court of law. In essence, then, the Court said that Mr. Clinton may not wrap himself in the office of the Presidency to evade the legal system and avoid personal responsibility. The Court's unanimous decision is a vindication not only of Mrs. Jones, but also of Ed Meese. The former attorney general was among the earliest and most vocal critics of Mr. Clinton's attempt to misuse the Constitution. The decision is also a repudiation of Attorney General Janet Reno, who directed Justice Department lawyers to file pro-Clinton briefs throughout the litigation. So much for Miss Reno's independence—and for her understanding of the Constitution.

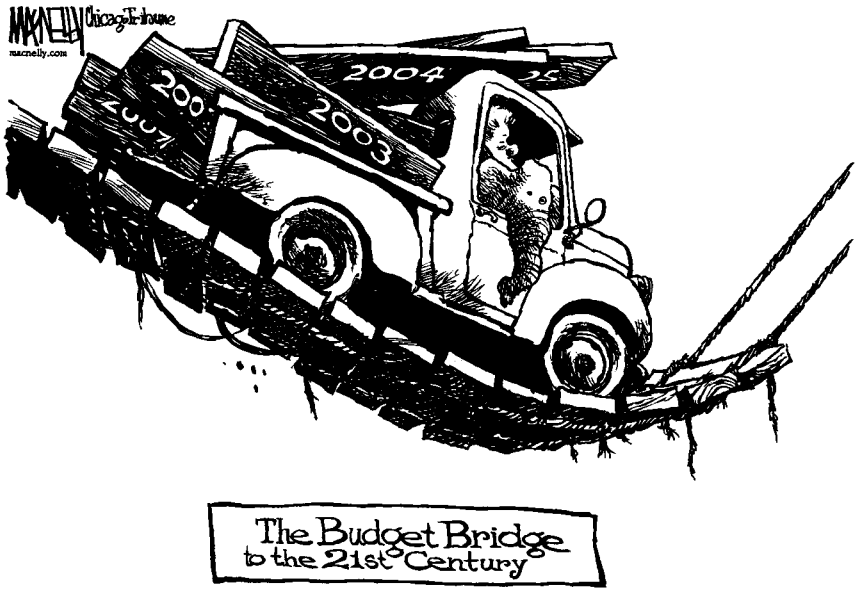
■ Clinton Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles is bailing out soon. Visitors to the Lincoln Bedroom have stayed in the White House longer.

■ When the entire Democratic apparatus in Washington takes to smearing Republicans for supposedly starving innocent flood victims, the GOP must be doing something right. In this case, Senate Republicans seem adamant about including a so-called Continuing Resolution in an emergency supplemental spending bill for victims of the Midwestern floods. The CR would mean that, even if the White House and congressional Republicans can't agree on a final budget bill, the Federal Government would stay open, and spending would automatically remain at this year's levels. President Clinton hates the idea and is threatening a veto. The White House desperately wants the leverage that the threat of a government shutdown gives it in negotiating the details of the budget deal—both to ensure that the GOP delivers on the promised spending increase and to get its way on the tax cuts (the President has already obliquely threatened to veto GOP "tax cuts for the rich"). Majority Leader Trent Lott is wise to insist on the CR, even if it invites Democratic demagoguery about delaying disaster relief (for which, in reality, there is already enough money). The Democrats are interested only in the flood of dollars coming out of Washington—and will say or do anything to keep it flowing unabated.

■ Maybe White House friends of Webb Hubbell can also arrange work for those coming off the welfare rolls.

■ The supply-side reforms of the late Seventies and Eighties—deregulating trucking, natural gas, the airlines, and other industries—are one reason for the economy's surprising strength today. There is every reason to believe that deregulating electricity, too, will yield economic gains. It is important, however, that deregulation not become the pretext for a massive government bailout of electrical utilities. The industry is asking for exactly that by demanding compensation for the loss of its monopolies. Already states have provided about $100 billion to buy off the utilities; if the total gets much higher, deregulation itself could be discredited. The Federal Government should safeguard the free flow of interstate commerce, one of its constitutional duties, by blocking these bailouts and setting deadlines for states to deregulate. Simultaneously, it should get out of the business of providing and marketing electricity itself, by privatizing the Power Marketing Administrations and the Tennessee Valley Authority and closing the Rural Utilities Service (formerly the Rural Electrification Administration). Eliminating the TVA's $1.2 billion in hidden subsidies, a longtime conservative goal, should be placed back on the agenda now that the TVA is trying to make discussions of its privatization illegal. Some form of deregulation is coming. It is worth the effort to get it right.

■ Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott kicked some Air Force butt for beating up on Kelly Flinn and, like, they should "get real," this is the Nineties. These days the stupid party is, like, with it.



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■ For years, the differential between the wages of union and non-union workers has been narrowing. In 1982, union members enjoyed a 7.1 per cent advantage; by 1985, the gap was 4.4 per cent. In the first quarter of 1997, the tables have finally turned: unionized workers now receive 0.8 per cent *less* than their non-union peers. The last prop beneath organized labor's claim to be the cornerstone of worker prosperity has collapsed.

■ Her attorney, in prepared spin, said that Kelly Flinn "made a mistake" and is "sorry," but is being unfairly singled out for punishment because she is a woman, whereas men always get away with it, and it doesn't matter whether you might nuke North Dakota instead of North Korea, it's how you feel about it.

■ President Clinton flew to Paris to sign the "Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation, and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation." It is a grotesque document, filled with obsequious reassurances to Russia of NATO's benign intentions (see Charles Gati, p. 27). Administration lawyers can point to ambiguities designed to limit Russia's future claims, but the document has the unambiguous purpose of creating a new institution—a "Permanent Joint Council" between NATO and Russia, situated at NATO headquarters in Brussels, with an unlimited capacity to complicate the Alliance's decision-making in a crisis. The Administration makes matters worse by claiming that these concessions, made to buy Russian acquiescence in NATO's enlargement, were changes that would have occurred spontaneously to ensure harmony in Europe. The Senate must clean up the mess, to the extent it can, by reaffirming the supremacy of NATO's existing institutions (especially the North Atlantic Council) and the Alliance's right to defend its members by any means it chooses. The Senate should act now, and not wait for next year's vote on new NATO members.

■ The Democratic National Committee, $15.9 million in debt, is considering bankruptcy. This works out to defaulting on the return of all those illegal contributions, which in turn works out to keeping all the proceeds from the illegal political favors they purchased. There seems no way out of this except selling the DNC. Again.

■ Two years ago *NR* welcomed French President Jacques Chirac's election on a supply-side program of tax cuts and deregulation, but warned that he would fail "unless he also dilutes the '*franc fort*,' and halts moves toward a single currency . . ." After a few months in office, with all the freedom afforded by a vast parliamentary majority, Mr. Chirac made the wrong choice. He committed himself to joining the single currency—the policy that had already destroyed two French governments—on terms that required monetary and fiscal tightness. Since this increased unemployment rather than reducing it as Chirac had promised, it created exactly the wrong atmosphere in which to cut France's bloated welfare state. Chirac's prime minister (the brilliant but aloof Alain Juppé, who incarnates France's hotly disliked meritocratic oligarchy) nonetheless moved tentatively to do so—only to back down whenever his reforms ran into popular opposition. So Chirac, risking possible defeat now in order to avert certain defeat later, called an early election. The gamble failed; in the first round a Left coalition wedded to antediluvian statism soundly defeated the Right. Juppé has since been guillotined, and a conservative win is theoretically possible in the second round. But whatever the color of the government's ideology, if it pursues the establishment's deflationary policies and the single currency, which have now been rejected three times by the people, it will fail—for the fourth time.

■ Evidence mounts that the Chinese granted the Democrats Most Favored Party status.

■ Mohammed Khatami was the upset winner in Iran's presidential election. A reputed "moderate," he was the clear choice of an electorate fed up with the regime. His victory vindicated the U.S. strategy of "containment," which had mobilized an international boycott (albeit a leaky one) on Iran, compounding its economic problems and keeping it off balance diplomatically. Perhaps Khatami will turn out to be the Gorbachev of the Islamic regime. In the meantime, continuing Western firmness is in order. The burden is still on Iran to change its behavior—to cease its support for terrorism and subversion, pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, opposition to Arab–Israeli peace, and all-around hostility to the West. A real change will deserve a response. But nothing less.

■ A Detroit lady informed two gentlemen that they were the father of her two-year-old boy. This biological impossibility led to an arrangement whereby they shared temporary custody of the boy—until blood tests showed that a third gentleman had done the honors.

■ Last month the libertarian writer John McClaughry

Indictment, Anyone?

They played the tape on ABC.
The voice came from a deputy,
Not Starr himself, but what it said
Made Mike McCurry turn his head
The way one did when Wyatt Earp
Strode in to manacle a perp,
Or when Madame Defarge stopped knitting
To see (ker-PLUNK!) whose head was hitting.

—W. H. VON DREELE

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Mauro E. Mujica, Architect
Chairman/CEO, U.S.English

Why An Immigrant Heads An Organization Called U.S.English.

His name is Mauro E. Mujica. He immigrated to the United States in 1965 to study architecture at Columbia University. English was not his first language then – but he is perfectly bilingual today. Learning English was never an option. It was required for success. Now he is the Chairman of U.S.ENGLISH, the nation's largest organization fighting to make English the common language of government at all levels. Why? Because English is under assault in our schools, in our courts and by bureaucrats and self-appointed leaders for immigrant groups. The whole notion of a melting pot society is threatened if new immigrants aren't encouraged to adopt the common language of this country. We're not suggesting that people shouldn't hold onto their native languages. We just don't believe the government should spend money providing services in multiple languages when money could be better used teaching new immigrants English.

Join us. Support us. Fight with us.

Because English is the key to opportunity for all new immigrants.

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Gephardt Drops the Boom

It fell, but not with quite the crash
A Titan managed in a clash;
The other Titan, so to speak
(Al Gore), suppressed a gastric squeak,
While Clinton, gimping toward the head,
Retreated toward the poop, instead,
Where Newt and Trent, guests for the day,
Arranged a smart "Hip, hip, hooray!"

—W. H. VON DREELE

wrote to Philip R. Sharp, Director of the Institute of Politics at the Kennedy School of Government: "Thank you for your letter asking me to contribute to the Ronald H. Brown Political and Public Service Internship Program, honoring the late Ron Brown, who according to your letter 'died on a mission of public service . . . hoping to bring peace to a war-torn land.' Bulls---. There is probably no one in national politics who is not aware that the engaging Ron Brown was a big-time crook, influence peddler, and racial spoilmeister and the focus of as many as seven corruption investigations. Ron Brown's trade mission . . . was no more than a scheme to suck up to fatuous businessmen seeking government favors for their businesses, and willing to arrange large contributions to the Democratic National Committee to keep their pal Ron on the job for them in Washington. You want to honor this guy? . . . As a former Fellow of your Institute, I regret this very much."

■ We remained silent during the controversies over the FDR Memorial: Wheelchair or no wheelchair? What about the cigarette, and Eleanor's fur coat? Now that the hoopla is over, though, we can't help noting that the political bickering and hypersensitivity to pressure groups is as much a monument to Roosevelt as anything the sculptors did.

They're No Angels

THE good news is that a member of the congressional leadership had the courage to stand on principle and oppose the bi-partisan budget sham. The bad news is that it was House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt (D., Mo.). Liberal Democratic icons like Sens. Wellstone (Minn.) and Kennedy (Mass.) joined him in opposition. Self-described conservatives in Congress should be embarrassed: it is harder for Democrats to break with President Clinton than for Republicans to stand up to Newt Gingrich, and yet only Rep. Chris Cox (Calif.) among GOP leaders has done so. The major disappointment on this score is Majority Leader Dick Armey, who surely knows that the deal is rotten.

Conservatives are being urged to support the deal, despite its profligacy, because it includes tax cuts. Promises, promises. Republicans continue to accept liberal rules about "paying for" tax cuts, and under those rules the budget has too little money for all the cuts they are talking about. The incredible shrinking tax cut will pit members of the conservative coalition against one another, while liberals divide the spoils of victory on spending. And what stops the President from vetoing any tax-cut package after he gets his phony entitlement savings passed?

The mantra of congressional leaders, borrowed from Rush Limbaugh, is that "the angels are in the details"—i.e., Republicans control the Congress and will be able to enact policies like medical savings accounts for Medicare. We hope so. But this budget deal is driven by fear of another showdown with President Clinton and the GOP's desire to avoid controversy. The same pressures will militate against any reforms that could draw a veto.

It is neither unprecedented nor necessarily catastrophic that a bi-partisan budget deal should expand government and increase the deficit. But it would be both if such a travesty passed with the enthusiastic support of conservatives. Speaker Gingrich, in a closed-door meeting with conservative activists, condescendingly explained that outside pressure from the Right to improve the deal would be unhelpful, since the rank and file is too prone to see a sellout—or, to put it more bluntly, too politically unsophisticated and paranoid to govern. (Shut up, he explained.) If they follow this advice and apologize for the deal, conservatives outside Congress like the Christian Coalition, Americans for Tax Reform, and Rush Limbaugh risk becoming front-men for the GOP. The Right will have negated the reasons for its own existence.

Sen. Phil Gramm is right to oppose the deal, and he could use some more allies. It is unlikely that such a group will be able to defeat the deal—though not as unlikely as its backers think. And when the deal is universally recognized to be a Republican debacle, the leaders of today's fight will then be recognized as the leaders of the principled wing of conservative Republicanism.

Once to Every Man

PRESIDENT Clinton, worried about his place in history, is expected to announce this month a major initiative on race, which he calls America's "constant curse." If Mr. Clinton's past is any guide, look for rhetorical feints in all directions, coupled with a determination to maintain the policy status quo, especially with respect to racial preferences: "Mend it, don't end it," as he has said before. His isn't the only reputation on the line. How Newt Gingrich responds to the President will

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The Court Jester Awards

Tuesday, June 10, National Press Club

The Court of Public Opinion is now in session.

One by one, on matters vital to the character of our communities and the nature of our great nation, arrogant judges have legislated from the bench to impose on us that which we would never have approved through that mainstay of a republic ~ the ballot. This judicial tyranny must end!

In the spirit of former Senator William Proxmire's "Golden Fleece" Award, the Family Research Council announces the **1997 Court Jester Awards**. The *Jesters* will be awarded on Tuesday, June 10th, recognizing the past year's most outrageous examples of judicial tyranny.

The Jesters ~ to show that Americans are serious about restoring democracy.

The Invisible Ink Award
To a judge who sees invisible words in the Constitution but can't see the words that are really there.

The See-No-Evil Award
To a judge who turns a blind eye to crime ~ insisting that criminals are victims of society.

The "Overruled!" Award
To a judge who finds citizens incompetent to manage their local affairs, opting to manage them himself.

The "Out of Order!" Award
To a judge who uses bizarre logic in lofty legalese to justify an absurd decision.

The Dishonorable Mention Award
A lifetime achievement award given to a judge whose career on the bench provides example upon example of decisions meriting the above awards.

Judges need not be present to win.

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decide whether conservatives can any longer count him as reliably one of their own.

For decades, America's races have lived in a house built by liberalism, on a blueprint of quotas and preferences. These have helped blacks only to the extent of stuffing them into make-work government (and, increasingly, corporate) jobs. Most other indices of black social health have plummeted. Preferences discriminate against whites, and against non-black minorities like Asian-Americans. Most ominously, they are the template for multiculturalism: the project which aims to transform America into a latter-day Ottoman Empire. So dominant and damaging have preferences and their multicultural twin become that even an old-style liberal like Arthur Schlesinger Jr. has begun to worry about American unity, while a proto-neocon like Nathan Glazer has decided to make his peace with what he sees as the inevitable.

Newt Gingrich has often behaved as if he, too, thought preferences inevitable. He came to prominence in the supply-side wing of the GOP, which hoped that tax cuts would make discussions of unpleasant cultural issues unnecessary. During the 104th Congress, he put the issue on the back burner. (Even Bob Dole did more, co-sponsoring Rep. Charles Canady's bill against quotas in federal contracts.) He campaigned for California's Proposition 209, but belatedly. This January, he invited Jesse Jackson, not Ward Connerly, to be his guest at the State of the Union address. Last month he said on *Meet the Press* that "affirmative action" was necessary until we can "reach out" to black children.

Conversions are possible: Newt Gingrich converted House Republicans into a governing party. But the power to govern should be bestowed on those who are willing to address pressing national issues with truth and force. What Republicans, conservatives, and indeed all Americans need is a spokesman who can step up, after President Clinton's revival meeting, and say that the daydream of "affirmative action" has been baseless and damaging and the quota system must be dismantled. If Mr. Gingrich cannot say that—and back up his words by supporting early passage of the Canady bill—then Americans will conclude that the GOP has lost all sight of its moral bearings.

News That Misfits

"ACADEMY'S REPORT SAYS IMMIGRATION BENEFITS THE U.S.—no huge costs are cited," read the headline on the *New York Times*'s May 18 story about the National Academy of Sciences' report, *The New Americans: Economic, Demographic, and Fiscal Effects of Immigration*. Translated into English, this means: "ACADEMY'S REPORT SAYS IMMIGRATION DOES NOT BENEFIT THE U.S.—huge costs are cited." The NAS report is a stunning vindication of the new economic research pioneered by Harvard's George Borjas and reported in *NR*, which has identified profound problems resulting from the post-1965 influx, and it is a rout for the Cato Institute, the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page, and others who have been denying or ignoring these problems. That so many media accounts missed this is a triumph of the spin doctor's art, possibly tracing back to the NAS's permanent staff, who put out a curiously misleading press release.

For consider the key points of the NAS report:

—The current immigration has produced little or no net economic gain for native-born Americans. The NAS's estimates of such a gain range from $1 to $10 billion—utterly trivial in the context of a $7.5-trillion economy, perhaps one-tenth of 1 per cent. America is being transformed for—nothing.

—Current immigration is now inflicting significant net fiscal costs on native-born Americans. Path-breaking analyses specially prepared for the NAS show that for New Jersey, one of the six states most affected by immigration, costs of immigration result in an additional net state and local tax burden per native household of $229 per year. For California, the load is a staggering $1,174 per year. (Suggesting a new referendum question; "Are you happy with current immigration into the state or would you rather have $1,174 a year?") Averaged across the entire country, immigration costs in taxes a startling $166 to $226 per native household, or $15 to $20 billion a year. (Note that this tax cost far exceeds all estimates of aggregate macroeconomic gain from immigration.)

—Current immigrants show deteriorating skill levels, on average, relative to natives, a result of the flawed selection process begun in the 1965 Act.

—Current immigration varies enormously in its effects according to national origin (European and Canadian immigrants are actually a fiscal plus in New Jersey) and education (the report says flatly that "if the only policy goal were the maximization of the positive fiscal impact of immigrants, the way to accomplish it would be to admit only those with the highest education"). The 1965 Act effectively discriminates against these useful groups.

—Current immigration is responsible for an overall

Adieu to All That

From Kinshasa, where Kabila
Can converse in fluent French,
To Morocco, where the Arabs
Parlez-vous *around a wench,*
The élites *adore an* éclair
With a suitable Sauterne,
While consigning Gallic grandeur
To a mortuary urn.

—W. H. VON DREELE

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wage loss of perhaps 1.2 per cent for native workers in the 1980s. A small loss, but a loss nonetheless—and one concentrated on high-school dropouts, being responsible for nearly half of their 10 per cent wage decline relative to high-school graduates.

The NAS report is mostly deadpan and prudently prolix. Immigration enthusiasts get a number of verbal, as opposed to substantive, salutes. Thus the report goes out of its way to say that blacks are not much affected by immigration. Closer reading, however, reveals that this is only because most blacks do not live in states with the highest concentrations of immigrants (and the assertion in any case is contradicted by the report's own findings on the nationwide relative wage decline of high-school dropouts, who are disproportionately black).

In a peculiar exercise in economic science fiction, the NAS report imagines a scenario where immigrants might be useful fiscally. If, in the year 2015, Washington suddenly and sharply raised taxes to avoid cutting Medicare, Social Security, and other entitlements, immigrants might then pay higher taxes, eventually becoming a fiscal positive and lowering the average tax burden by definition. (Assuming, naturally, that the economy did not collapse under such a government grab.) But even in this scenario, high-school dropouts are *never* a fiscal positive. Yet up to two-fifths of the post-1965 influx are in this category.

Facts and logic have not been at a premium in the modern immigration debate. But now immigration enthusiasts have no excuse at all. In the words of Joe Louis, they can run but they can't hide.

The Age of Clinton

For weeks in *Washington* the ugly pall
Of dire *Civility* lay over all
And those solicitous o'er what they feel
Were feeling good about the *Budget Deal*,
When from left field bold *Gephardt* thundered "No!"
To please the *AFL* and *CIO*.
Down with the bland consensus! All the same,
His presidential horse is running lame.
For *Clintonism*, so lately brought to birth,
Already reaches out to the whole earth
With mush-mouthed flatt'ry given every side
And doing what looks good but being tried,
Engaging randomly in foreign wars
While cutting troops and weaponry and stores
And not acknowledging he's any foes
But gun nuts and tobacco *CEO*s.
And so the President takes to the air
To visit *Britain* now it's ruled by *Blair*—
A man of passion, charm, and few beliefs
Whose preference for boxers or for briefs
Is yet unknown. Nor has he a *Ms. Jones,*
Though's Cabinet is stuffed with *Clinton* clones.

Yet why we know *das* Rube *das ist der Mann*
Is his new way of being partisan:
To his opponent's groin apply the knee
While calling for increased civility;
Scold *Congress* for not passing legislation
Himself holds up, and going on vacation;
Lament the wanton cruelty and harm
Republicans have done to those who farm;
The land that's flooded and the stock that drowns
May rot, but he'll keep government shutdowns,
By which, as *Gingrich* lately let him see,
The pants he'll still scare off the *GOP*.
(His own come off, by irony's cruel sport,
When *Paula* finally drags him into court.)

—Juvenal

Heart of Darkness

LAURENT KABILA, new head of the "Democratic Republic of Congo" (known for a while as Zaïre), was in his youth a disciple of Patrice Lumumba and a groupie of Che Guevara. That is all one needs to know in order to understand what is happening in that country. The tragedy about to descend is matched only by the befuddlement of the Clinton Administration and the media, who thought justice would reign once they had eased out longtime dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

As U.S. diplomacy unfolded, led by our UN ambassador, Bill Richardson, there was much crowing about how Americans were supplanting the French in francophone Africa. But *NR* withheld its applause from a scenario that eerily recalled the Carter Administration's welcome for the Sandinistas. Richardson insisted that it was wrong to prejudge Kabila: even though his troops had been committing atrocities as they advanced, mostly against Rwandan refugees, Kabila had given Richardson assurances about free elections and pluralism, and should be allowed to make them good. Within days of taking power, Kabila postponed elections indefinitely, excluded all other prominent anti-Mobutu figures from his government, banned all political parties and activities, and, for good measure, banned any demonstrations that anyone might contemplate to protest any of the above.

This should not have been a surprise. Kabila's aides had told the *Washington Post* in April that the war against Mobutu was a "class struggle." A "people's government" was being set up, based on cells of loyalists to be installed, Cuban-style, in nearly every institution of the society—industries, businesses, universities, cultural institutions. (At least one person in every cell would be in charge of security, responsible for identifying "enemies of change.") In a National Public Radio commentary that puzzled over Kabila's future course, hope was found in the fact that Che Guevara reportedly had a low opinion of the young Kabila's ideological commitment. Well, yes, Kabila may not have had the labor theory of value down pat. But on the cardinal Leninist precept—take power by force and never let go of it—he clearly gets an A+.

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Smoke Rings

WANT to know when the next court case against the tobacco companies is about to start? Wait till you read in the papers about some new "study" on the health effects of smoking. A week before jury selection in a suit by the nation's flight attendants over secondhand smoke in airplanes, the American Heart Association published a report by a Harvard group claiming a 91 per cent increase in the risk of heart attacks among those exposed to other's smoke.

This is a classic in junk science. 1) Secondhand smoke was a minor aspect of a study of nurses' health. The Harvard crowd focused on one question which asked whether the nurses had "never," "occasionally," or "regularly" been exposed to cigarette smoke, and found a higher rate of self-reported heart trouble among those who answered "regularly." 2) No attempt was made to define the terms. Basic survey practice is to specify how frequent is "occasional" or "regular." 3) It is unclear how many of the nurses were themselves smokers or ex-smokers.

It has certainly been established that smokers pay a price in increased health risks, but claims of the effect of secondhand smoke are just that—claims. That is partly because it is very difficult to measure how much secondhand smoke different people have inhaled. The most persuasive studies are those which have looked at the length of time non-smokers lived in the same household with smokers; these studies have found no relationship with illness.

One of the authors of the Harvard study, Charles Hennekens, wrote two years ago that such epidemiology is "a crude and inexact science" and that health researchers "tend to overstate findings either because we want attention or more grant money." Or to be called as "expert witnesses" by plaintiffs' lawyers?

NOTES & ASIDES

■ Dear Bill:

Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking, I thought you'd be interested in reading my "brief remarks," to be delivered, somehow, at a dinner for honorary-degree recipients and college trustees on May 25. John McCardell, the Middlebury president, will host the affair.

As ever,
Bill
[W. H. von Dreele]

When I go to parties in New York, and when I'm asked what I do for a living, and when I say I write verse for William Buckley's NATIONAL REVIEW—the atmospherics sometimes become tense.

So when I realized that I'd be returning to Middlebury for this honor, I took comfort from reported sightings of NATIONAL REVIEW in John and Bonnie McCardell's living room.

To give you a feeling for this tension, I'm going to read a short verse called, "After the Election."

I shall not fall upon my sword
In classic Roman style,
Nor shall I swallow sleeping pills
And soil the bathroom tile.
No, I shall simply carry on,
Continuing to screw
Bill Clinton and the liberals
In NATIONAL REVIEW.

Dear Bill: Make that a double Litt. D.! And congratulations to you and Middlebury. Cordially, Bill

■ Dear Mr. Buckley:

Regarding your new book, *The Right Word*, about vocabulary and literary composition, mathematicians might say that your work and that of Mr. Webster were futile. It is impossible to write a perfect dictionary, because if each word is defined from words that were already defined, then to avoid an infinite regression some words must be left undefined.

The only escape from this dilemma, besides having circularity of definitions, is to allow non-verbal definitions. With "ostensive definitions" words are defined by pointing at objects, actions, or pictures. If a dictionary has no pictures, then it necessarily has some circularity of definitions, especially with synonyms.

Do you understand me, more or less?

Bruce Bloomfield
San Jose, Calif.

Dear Mr. Bloomfield: I understand you completely. But there is a little of the deconstructionist flavor in what you say. But essentially the point is there: "Three" doesn't tell you objectively what three raised fingers do. Cordially,
WFB

Dear Mr. Buckley:

James Jackson Kilpatrick's motto, as in his review of *The Right Word* [Dec. 5], is

ESCHEW OBFUSCATION

And I agree with him.

Sincerely yours,
Alex R. Thomas
San Antonio, Tex.

Dear Mr. Thomas: I agree too! But obfuscation isn't the kind of thing I plead for. It's different from nuance, right?
—WFB

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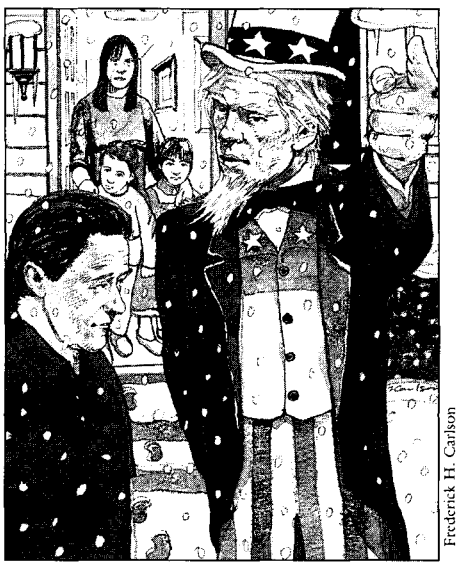
CAPITAL SCENE

Breaking the Welfare Cycle

ROBERT RECTOR



Frederick H. Carlson

WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE first historic battle in the war against the welfare state has been fought and won. The field of battle was Wisconsin, where Gov. Tommy Thompson's reforms have shattered a fifty-year legacy of dependency, and have left welfare apologists fleeing in disarray. Still, a single victory does not mean the war is won—and back in Washington, D.C., and in state capitals around the nation, the hosts of high liberalism are girding for their counterattack.

Since taking office a decade ago, Gov. Thompson has waged an unremitting campaign against dependency and welfare bloat. The result: a 55 per cent drop in Wisconsin's Aid to Families with Dependent Children caseload. In inner-city Milwaukee, the welfare caseload has dropped by a third. Throughout much of the state, AFDC has been all but eliminated: in 28 of Wisconsin's 77 counties, the welfare caseload has shrunk by 80 per cent or more.

The story gets even better. Generally, as welfare rolls shrink, the most employable people exit first, leaving behind a core of more heavily dependent recipients. Thus, conventional wisdom would expect the decline of Wisconsin's caseload to slow and then halt. Exactly the opposite has happened. As Thompson implemented more rigorous reforms over the last two years, the pace of dependency reduction accelerated dramatically. Currently the AFDC rolls are plummeting downward by 2 per cent per month in Milwaukee and 4 per cent in the rest of the state. Overall, the caseload has dropped by almost one-third in the last year alone.

Meanwhile, as the chart (p. 20) shows, during much of the relevant period national caseloads were soaring. Although in the last two years the national AFDC caseload has fallen by 17 per cent, this represents only a peeling back of the explosive growth of dependency which occurred in the early Nineties, when AFDC nationwide rocketed up 35 per cent. In the majority of states, AFDC dependency remains higher today than when Ronald Reagan left the White House.

The lessons to be learned from Wisconsin are of enormous importance. Thompson's reforms are based on three policy principles: 1) reducing unnecessary new entries into AFDC; 2) establishing real work requirements; and 3) erecting incentives to ensure faithful implementation of reform by the bureaucracy.

In developing his first principle, Thompson has rediscovered one of the key ideas of traditional charity: a rational system for offering assistance must have a gate-keeping mechanism that separates those who truly need aid from the much larger number of those who do not. Recognizing that the surest way to break the habit of dependency was to prevent it from being formed in the first place, Wisconsin's reform team established a new program, Self-Sufficiency First, with the goal of dissuading unnecessary new entries into AFDC. Self-Sufficiency First provides counseling to new welfare applicants on the negative effects of dependency. It offers short-term aid (such as money for auto repairs) which may help to eliminate the person's need to receive AFDC, and it requires applicants to complete several weeks of supervised job search before their first welfare check is issued. Finally, applicants are warned that they will be required to work in exchange for benefits within a few weeks after entry into the AFDC program. The results are clear: since the implementation of SSF, the number of new AFDC enrollments has been cut nearly in half.

The second reform principle is to require recipients to work. The initial step was a realization that government-run job training has a long unsuccessful history, neither reducing dependency nor raising the earning capacity of trainees. For example, a recent Labor Department study of the government's largest training program, the Job Training Partnership Act, finds that JTPA increased the hourly wage rates of female trainees by 3.4 per cent and of males not at all.

Thus Thompson's staff de-emphasized classroom training and stressed activities leading to immediate employment. Furthermore, if applicants have not obtained a private-sector job after some six weeks of continuous supervised job search, they are then required to perform community-service work in exchange for ongoing AFDC benefits.

In 28 of Wisconsin's 77 counties, the welfare caseload has shrunk by 80 per cent or more.

Here, as always, the key is in the details. In a typical state, AFDC recipients may theoretically be required to perform community-service work but will receive only a financial slap on the wrist if the work is not done. In Wisconsin, all AFDC recipients are subject to a Pay for Performance rule. If they fail to perform the specified number of hours of work or other activity, their AFDC and Food Stamps benefits are reduced pro rata. Thus, if the recipient

Mr. Rector is senior policy analyst at the Heritage Foundation.

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is required to perform 30 hours of work but completes only 15, welfare benefits are cut in half. Pay for Performance has eliminated the option of a free income from welfare, making Wisconsin the first state that seriously requires AFDC recipients to earn their welfare checks.

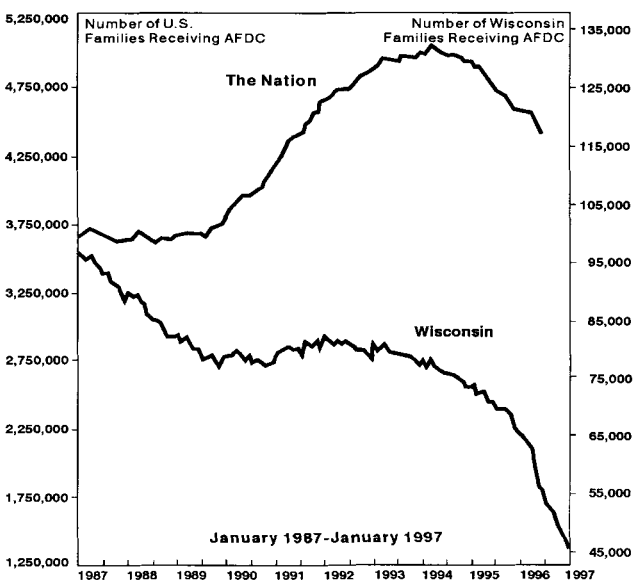
Once welfare benefits must be earned, the attractiveness, or economic "utility," of welfare shrivels up and the number entering or remaining on AFDC shrinks dramatically. This lesson is critical. Until now, much of the political debate about reform has envisioned creating millions of make-work jobs for welfare recipients. But the Wisconsin example shows that while mandatory community-service work drives down the caseload, relatively few recipients will actually end up in community-service positions. Instead, the prospect of being forced to do community-service work reduces new welfare enrollments and propels current recipients quickly into private-sector employment.

Finally, Thompson realized that the best-designed reforms could be rendered impotent by a hostile or indifferent welfare bureaucracy. Thus he created powerful incentives to guide and motivate the state's welfare establishment. County welfare offices have been forced to earn day-care and training funds by increasing the number of recipients placed in community service or private-sector employment. Moreover, welfare offices that fail to reduce caseloads dramatically face an unprecedented penalty: they can be replaced by outside contractors. Wisconsin's bureaucracy has responded well, implementing reform with unusual efficiency and zeal.

In radically reducing Wisconsin's welfare caseload, Gov. Thompson has demolished most of the myths buttressing the liberal welfare state. These include: welfare recipients want to work but no jobs are available; shortages of day care and transportation make work impossible; education and training are the key to cutting dependency; and sharp reductions in welfare caseload will lead to severe economic deprivation.

Desperate to find some pretext for dismissing Wisconsin's victory over dependency, liberals claim the drop in caseload is due to a "hot" economy. This is ridiculous; the most robust state economy has never had a fraction of this impact on AFDC dependency. Moreover, if Wisconsin is compared to various states with lower levels of unemployment, one finds that none of the others have had a large drop in dependency. Another liberal ploy is to claim that Thompson's reforms have raised total welfare costs. This is simply untrue. During Thompson's tenure, aggregate welfare spending on AFDC benefits, administration, day care, and training has fallen some 15 per cent in nominal dollars, even as this figure was nearly doubling in the rest of the nation. Adjusted for inflation, Wisconsin's total costs have fallen by more than a third.

AFDC Families: Wisconsin vs. The Nation



The most interesting feature of the Wisconsin story is the extraordinary impact of relatively mundane policies. Pay for Performance and Self-Sufficiency First are just common sense, rigorously applied. Any state could implement these policies tomorrow. They are easy to defend politically, as well. Only 2 of Wisconsin's 77 counties currently have time limits; recipients are not booted into the street when their time runs out. True, a significant number of recipients have had all welfare benefits terminated when they failed to work in a community-service position provided by the state. However, when liberals begin to whine about these people, the response is that their checks will be resumed whenever they bother to show up at their job site and begin working. Even the most nimble-tongued apologist has a hard time depicting this as unreasonable and mean.

After Thompson's success story, other states must be stampeding to adopt the Wisconsin model, right? Guess again. The main problem at the state level is lack of conservative welfare expertise. The details of reform in most states are left to professional welfare bureaucrats, who are unsympathetic to genuine conservative initiatives and adept at sprucing up variants of the status quo with conservative rhetoric.

While sluggishness in state capitals will certainly slow the spread of Wisconsin-style welfare reform, a far more dramatic threat has now emerged from the "End Welfare as We Know It" Clinton White House. Last week the Administration suddenly "discovered" that the Fair Labor Standards Act should apply to AFDC workfare, a rule never intended by Congress and never imposed in the past. Under this ruling, AFDC recipients performing community-service work must be compensated at least at the minimum-wage rate. Of course, guaranteeing all welfare recipients a minimum-wage salary is a bad idea in the first place. Worse, following the normal rules of Clinton-speak, "minimum wage" does not actually mean "minimum wage." The way the Administration's proposed regulations are phrased, the number of hours an AFDC recipient may be required to perform community service cannot exceed his welfare benefits divided by the minimum-wage rate ($4.75 per hour). However, for the Administration, welfare benefits mean only AFDC—other assistance, such as Food Stamps, Medicaid, and public housing, will not be counted.

Since the AFDC cash grant is only a small portion of the welfare given to AFDC families, the net effect of Clinton's scheme is to restrict greatly the number of hours a recipient may be required to work. In a few states with very high AFDC benefits the effect would not be too severe. But in the average state, recipients could be forced to work no more than 15 to 20 hours per week. In half the states the number of hours of required work would be lower than that, falling to as little as 5 hours per week. And the effective wage rate (benefits received from all welfare

(Continued on page 60)

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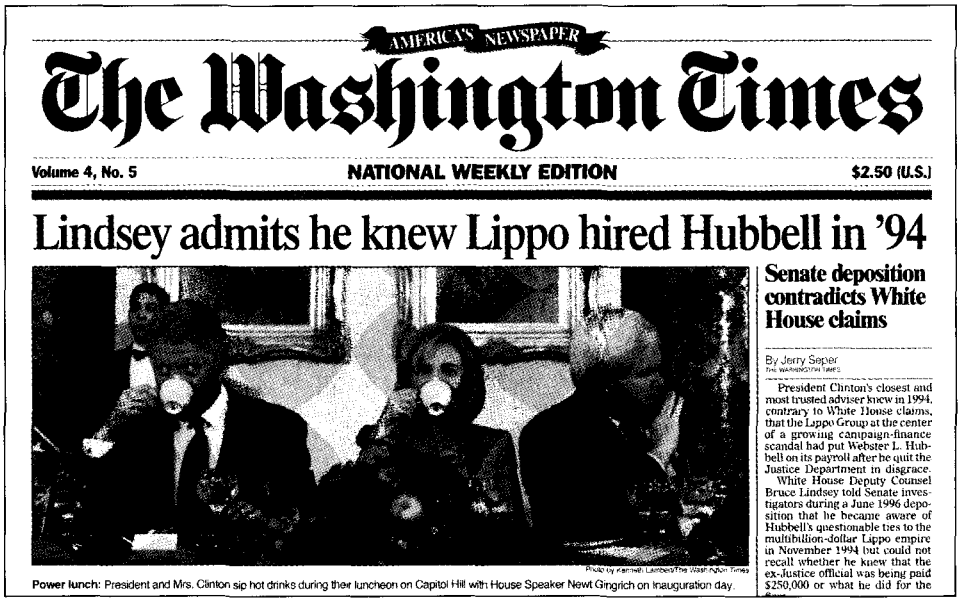

AMERICA'S NEWSPAPER

The Washington Times

Volume 4, No. 5 NATIONAL WEEKLY EDITION $2.50 (U.S.)

Lindsey admits he knew Lippo hired Hubbell in '94

Photo by Kenneth Lambert/The Washington Times

Power lunch: President and Mrs. Clinton sip hot drinks during their luncheon on Capitol Hill with House Speaker Newt Gingrich on inauguration day.

Senate deposition contradicts White House claims

By Jerry Seper
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

President Clinton's closest and most trusted adviser knew in 1994, contrary to White House claims, that the Lippo Group at the center of a growing campaign-finance scandal had put Webster L. Hubbell on its payroll after he quit the Justice Department in disgrace.

White House Deputy Counsel Bruce Lindsey told Senate investigators during a June 1996 deposition that he became aware of Hubbell's questionable ties to the multibillion-dollar Lippo empire in November 1994 but could not recall whether he knew that the ex-Justice official was being paid $250,000 or what he did for the

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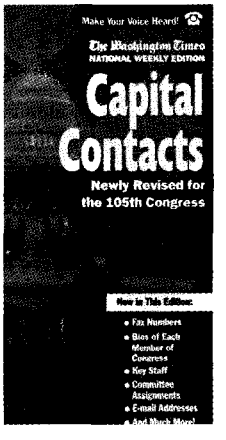

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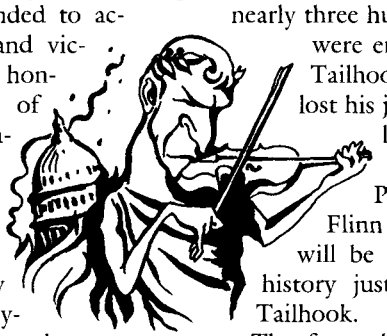
BREAD & CIRCUSES

WHEN Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott joined the chorus sneering at the military code of loyalty, self-restraint, honesty, and obedience, he committed what is nowadays called a "defining moment." Its immediate effect was to increase the pressure on the Air Force to grant Lt. Kelly Flinn, its first female B-52 pilot, the general discharge she sought—or, at least, graciously condescended to accept. Lt. Flinn, heroine and victim, had first demanded an honorable discharge in tones of the highest moral indignation. This claim flew in the media and in Congress, and it might have flown in Middle America too if the aggrieved wife of Kelly Flinn's soccer-coach boyfriend had not finally appeared, taking the shine off the lieutenant's heroine status and creating an alternative and more plausible victim.



This came too late to avert the Air Force's overall retreat in the latest gender skirmish. But it served to demonstrate that although the media have great advantages in setting the ideological terms of debate, their power is not absolute. A betrayed wife may be a traditional symbol, but it is one which feminism has not yet managed to demystify or make ridiculous.

By then, alas, Sen. Lott had proved decisively that the cultural elite had the power to intimidate Republican politicians, making them dance to its ideological tune. Those who eagerly condemned antediluvian standards of conduct in the military had uncritically accepted the media's account of the Flinn case as a misogynist assault on a lonely single woman who, innocently, had been seduced by a cad. The Air Force was further accused of applying a cruel double standard by court-martialing a female officer for behavior ignored in the case of male officers. As proof of this double standard, Lt. Flinn's defenders alleged that no male officers were court-martialed despite sexual assaults at Tailhook.

This was nonsense. Despite an exhaustive investigation and the Navy's desperate desire to appease the feminists, there was simply not enough evidence of actual assaults to warrant prosecutions. Plenty of male officers were punished anyway. In his *New Yorker* article of September 16, 1996, on the suicide of Admiral Mike Boorda, Peter Boyer reports that the careers of 14 admirals and nearly three hundred naval aviators were ended or damaged by Tailhook. (A single admiral lost his job for the laxity that left the American fleet vulnerable at Pearl Harbor.) The Flinn fiasco, incidentally, will be recorded in military history just as inaccurately as Tailhook.

The facts clearly show that Lt. Flinn was treated fairly by the Air Force from start to finish. The celebrity accorded her as a pioneer pilot testifies to its eagerness to highlight its integration of women into combat assignments. Her celebrity status (including, ironically, media training) might even have perversely persuaded her that she flew above the standards applicable to her earthbound colleagues. But when her messy lovelife became a problem for the Air Force, she received merely equal treatment. Even today's gender-sensitive military recognized that its golden girl had to be grounded if she was guilty of fraternization, flagrant disobedience, and dishonesty.

There are good military reasons for such rules as the policy against fraternization between the ranks. If an officer's orders can lead to death, then good order and discipline demand that no personal friendships undermine or bias his authority. Lt. Flinn knowingly broke this rule and abused her power as a superior officer when she had a casual affair with an enlisted man before she embarked on the more serious affair with Marc Zigo, a civilian living with his junior enlisted wife. In asking that the wrongs she suffered not be ignored, Gayla Zigo told the Secretary of the Air Force that "Less than a week after we arrived to the base, Lt. Flinn was in bed with my husband having sex."

Indeed, the affair was first reported by Mrs. Zigo. She complained to Lt. Flinn's (female) first sergeant, whose discreet warning went unheeded. Lt. Flinn's commanding officer then learned of the affair and ordered her to stay away from Zigo—the slap on the wrist that her defenders insist was a sufficient rebuke. It would have been sufficient if Lt. Flinn had obeyed it. But by that time she had elected to live with Marc Zigo rather than fly with the Air Force. And when she was investigated for disobeying this direct order, she lied under oath about the nature of the relationship.

Like a surprising number of women, Kelly Flinn was shocked when the married man she took up with proved untrustworthy. (Elite opinion has a double standard of its own here: it condemns Zigo for being unfaithful not to his wife but to his mistress. The really wronged woman, it seems, is the Other Woman.) When Lt. Flinn finally saw Zigo for a creep, she decided she wanted her Air Force career after all: it was an Airwoman's prerogative to change her mind. Her family hired a public-relations firm, she and her lawyer began their campaign to exploit the sympathetic media, and the rest is History—or at any rate Current Affairs.

The chivalrous Sen. Lott thought Miss Flinn was being "singled out" and admonished the Air Force to "get real." A better dose of reality was provided by another congressman, who had been imprisoned in North Vietnam while Lott was imprisoned in the law library at the University of Mississippi. Rep. Sam Johnson (R., Tex.), a fighter pilot held seven years by the Vietcong, supported the Air Force's original decision to court-martial Lt. Flinn, recognizing that "political pressure from the Senate" had caused the about-face.

But when Trent Lott declared that Kelly Flinn was "being badly abused," he sounded a warning that no soccer wives will be courted by the GOP next year as soccer moms were courted by all parties last year. The GOP's problem with the gender gap, he was saying, will not be solved by appealing to traditional women, who value the virtues that the military (and few other institutions) still demand. Instead, the GOP will be courting feminists, and disaster.

—KATE O'BEIRNE

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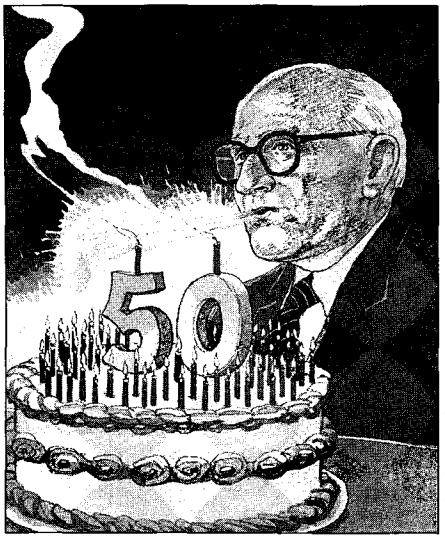
ON THE SCENE

The Plan to End Planning

RALPH HARRIS



Frederick H. Carlson

MONT PELERIN

IN the aftermath of World War II, when Friedrich Hayek assembled some three dozen like-minded American and European scholars on the slopes of Mont Pelerin above Lake Geneva, the outlook for freedom could hardly have been more bleak. Churchill had coined the phrase "Iron Curtain" to mark the apparently permanent division of Europe between East and West. Some of the German participants at this first Mont Pelerin Society meeting had difficulty getting travel passes to Switzerland. Marshall aid had yet to be launched for the reconstruction of shattered economies. In April 1947 the new Deutsche Mark was more than a year away, and cigarettes still served as the general medium of exchange. As a grim omen for the future, Hayek's new classic *The Road to Serfdom* (1944) was banned throughout Germany, not only in the Soviet zone, but also by the three Western powers of occupation.

Exactly 50 years later, some eighty of the now five hundred members of the society gathered at Mont Pelerin, a few hundred yards from the smaller hotel at which the first meeting was held, to mark the anniversary and review progress. On the face of it, the world around had been transformed in a direction that would have rejoiced our anxious founders. How far can we conclude, therefore, that the objectives of the Society are well on their way to being fulfilled?

An objective observer at that first gathering in 1947 must surely have marveled at Hayek's dream and mocked his tiny band of economists, philosophers, and historians cocooned in Switzerland, remote from the ugly realities throughout the rest of Europe. After all, their purpose was to launch an intellectual crusade aimed at reversing the rising tide of postwar collectivism already signaled by the swamping Labour majority that had swept Churchill aside in Britain—Hayek's chosen home since he quit Vienna in 1931.

It was one thing for the monetary experts at that 1947 gathering to chart the way from rationing, price control, and barter to a new German currency that was brilliantly imposed the following year by Ludwig Erhard, a friend of Hayek's. But Hayek's aim was far more ambitious. It was nothing less than to reconstruct the essential framework of a free society, with limited government under the rule of law, guaranteeing private property rights but permitting "the possibility of establishing minimum standards by means not inimical to initiative and functioning of the market." In short, Hayek's war aim was to reverse the tide of collectivism sweeping across Europe after 1945 from the Soviet Union westward to Britain, already being converted into a socialist laboratory. So did the whole enterprise amount—as a cynic might scoff—to a self-contradictory project of formulating a plan to end planning? And if so, the second question asks itself: Has the plan worked?

The first question is easier to dispose of than the second. Hayek would not have been discomforted by the quip that he was indulging in planning in order to end planning. As market economists never tire of emphasizing, there's nothing wrong with "planning" in everyday behavior, since it means no more than seeking to act rationally with as much foresight as an individual or group can muster. The planning which those early Mont Pelerinians sought to dethrone referred to ambitious projects devised by politicians, financed from "public" money, and imposed by coercion on a defenseless public.

So what was the big idea—the (private) plan—which Hayek proposed to his fellow plotters in 1947? The bare bones will be found in one of his most important essays, first published two years later as *The Intellectuals and Socialism*. It is none the worse for echoing the concluding paragraphs of *The General Theory*, where Keynes argues that it is the ideas of economists and philosophers ("both when they are right and when they are wrong") that rule the world. Hayek shrewdly spreads his net wider by defining "intellectuals" as going beyond academics, journalists, broadcasters, ministers, etc., to include opinionated doctors, scientists, and professional men who "because of their expert knowledge of their own subjects are listened to with respect on most others."

All such intellectuals Hayek defines as "professional second-hand dealers in ideas" who are attracted to socialism by the benevolence of its intentions and the excitement of its sweeping Utopian aspirations. Hence, to win the war of ideas, anti-socialists must project their own liberal Utopia. Said Hayek: "We must make the building of a free society once more an intellectual adventure, a deed of courage." The message of hope for all Mont Pelerinians was this: "Once the more active part of the intellectuals have been converted to a set of beliefs, the

To win the war of ideas, anti-socialists must project their own liberal Utopia.

Lord Harris is founder-president of the Institute for Economic Affairs.

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process by which these become generally accepted is almost automatic and irresistible."

This was the plan Hayek proposed setting in motion with the establishment of the Mont Pelerin Society. It was to be a kind of dispersed worldwide academy of uncompromising liberal scholars and students. It was a mobile, almost phantom academy. It had no base or permanent staff. Instead, over the next half-century, a growing number of carefully vetted members would meet in private conclave every year or two, at agreeable venues around the world—from Cambridge, Berlin, Paris, and Madrid to Princeton, Hong Kong, Sydney, and Prague. The program rings the changes on a single unvarying theme, that of exploring—without regard for what might be thought expedient or "politically possible"—both the philosophical foundation of the free society and the legal/institutional setting within which people are permitted maximum scope for freedom, peace, and prosperity. At every meeting expert papers would be read, followed by vigorous discussion, on all the endemic disorders of modern societies, from inflation, monopoly, protectionism, trade-unionism, lobbying, and state "welfare," to the cumulative growth of government, taxation, regulation, and all the other mischiefs to which "majoritarian democracy" is prey.

From the first meeting in 1947 the Society eschewed publicity. If more "second-hand dealers in ideas" were to spread the vision of the free society, their recruitment and re-education would be undertaken spontaneously (a favorite Hayekian word) by individual members through their lectures and writings or through the burgeoning of "think tanks" following the pioneering example of the Institute of Economic Affairs, established in 1957 by Antony Fisher, one of the minority of early business members of the Society.

SUCH was the broad plan to end planning. Fifty years later, how far could it be said to have been fulfilled?

It requires no invasion of the privacy of the anniversary meeting to mark a number of major landmarks in the worldwide retreat from socialism. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of Reagan and Thatcher as trailblazers for radical market reforms around the world hardly require elaboration. But can the Mont Pelerin Society claim part of the credit? Americans can best judge the influence of the many MPS members surrounding President Reagan. From Britain I have no quiver of doubt that Margaret Thatcher's central reform of trade unions, state industries, monetary policy, and much else owed a great deal to the advisors and members of Parliament directly instructed in market analysis by IEA publications shaped by Mont Pelerin principles. But the decisive role was played by our academics and journalists who helped transform public opinion on the market alternative to the failing collective consensus. Final proof of the Iron Lady's success was displayed in the recent British election, when "New Labour" won a landslide victory only by explicitly renouncing socialism and boasting it could make the "dynamic market economy" work better than the tired Conservatives could.

One of a new British breed of "contemporary historians" has gone on record with a more wide-ranging tribute to the MPS. Dr. Richard Cockett, author of *Thinking the Unthinkable*, was prompted by the anniversary to write of its meetings as marked by "rigorous debate about economics away from the gaze of *a world which probably now owes more to the MPS than any other single organization of intellectuals*. . . . [My italics.] Hayek and the Mont Pelerin Society are to the twentieth century what Karl Marx and the First International were to the nineteenth century."

This remarkable claim is lent strong credibility by a less noticed sign of success in the decisive intellectual battle of ideas. In 1974 an early signal was hoisted from neutral Sweden in the form of the totally unexpected nomination of Hayek as Nobel Laureate. True, the accolade was shared by a socialist Swedish economist whose name I have now forgotten. But the next award, in 1976, went exclusively to another founding member, Milton Friedman. By 1997, four further active MPS members had been similarly recognized: James Buchanan, George Stigler, Ronald Coase, and Gary Becker.

I must resist the temptation to quote from the ever lively discussions that marked the anniversary meeting. What I can reveal is that sober rejoicing over the undoubted spread of market ideas did not banish anxieties about the persistence of overblown government—even in the United States public spending has roughly doubled, from 20 to 40 per cent of national income, since the 1950s. True, the tide of central planning has been reversed, but only to be replaced throughout the West by the remorseless growth of collectivist welfare. Not only has this providential state failed to solve poverty, it has dangerously weakened the traditional moral foundations of self-support and voluntary action. For Europeans there is also the emerging shadow of a centralized bloc fused by protective regulation and preferring a constructivist single money to Hayek's competition in currencies.

At the closing dinner we pledged many toasts to the Society's founding fathers—of whom only Friedman was present. We did not need to pledge ourselves to continue the quest for limited government by freeing political democracy from capture by the multiplication of pressure groups that continue to undermine its legitimacy compared to the economic democracy of the market. I now express our remaining war aim as being to deprive (misrepresentative) democracy of its unmerited halo. □

Atlanticists in Real America

MARTIN SIEFF

PHOENIX

SPRINGTIME in Arizona. The temperature is a gentle 104 in the shade—"still mild," locals say sadistically—but the political climate is even hotter, for the spirit of Margaret Thatcher is abroad in the land.

Lady Thatcher, appearing, if anything, invigorated by the Labour landslide in Britain, has already adapted as easily as her hero Winston Churchill to being a prophet in the wilderness and has chosen the second New Atlantic Initiative conference held in the neo-Aztec corridors of Frank Lloyd Wright's Arizona Biltmore to deliver her latest clarion call against the "dangerous complacency" of the Western world.

Writing in the *New York Times*, the acerbic albeit witty Maureen Dowd

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compared Lady Thatcher on the campaign trail for John Major's doomed Conservative government to the crazed Norma Desmond in Billy Wilder's masterpiece *Sunset Boulevard*.

An effective missile defense must be regarded as a matter of the greatest urgency.

Close, but no cigar. Lady Thatcher as she ages, like a first-growth claret, becomes more spectacular, not less. The *Sunset Boulevard* parallel is not to the doomed loony Norma, but to the great Gloria Swanson, who brought her to life in the role of a lifetime. If asked, "Didn't you use to be big?" Lady Thatcher can echo, not the fictional Norma but the flesh-and-blood Miss Swanson in replying, "I *am* big. It's the politics that got small."

It was the drive to combat the dangers of small politics that brought Lady Thatcher and diplomats, business leaders, and sundry journalists from Britain, Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Latvia, and Estonia to Arizona for the second NAI conference, following last year's inaugural conference in Prague.

Lady Thatcher's latest warning was characteristically clear and uncompromising: "We in the West have lapsed into a dangerous complacency and relaxed our guard." Expansion of NATO along the lines currently being pursued will dilute and transform the alliance, removing the very focus that made it so successful for nearly half a century. De facto—even if unwritten—guarantees to Moscow not to station nuclear weapons or Western troops on the territory of new alliance members "would effectively create a two-tier membership. If NATO credibility is not to be seriously eroded, however, there must be only one category of membership . . . A weak or equivocal security guarantee can sometimes look like a green light to a potential aggressor, and with catastrophic consequences. . . . Those in Brussels—or Phoenix, or London for that matter—must understand the binding nature of the guarantees being extended to the new members and the risks and obligations that flow from them."

More important yet, as North Korea, despite its starving millions, continues to forge ahead with missiles that could hit the West Coast of the United States, "an effective global defense against missile attack must be regarded as a matter of the greatest urgency, not something to be researched at leisure," Lady Thatcher continues. Yet the Clinton Administration remains mulishly wedded to the technologically obsolete, and always problematic, 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

"How can we explain America's slow progress in exploiting its technological strengths through the deployment of a global system of ballistic-missile defense?" she asks. How indeed, since, as

Bonnie T. Gardner

the great science-fiction novelist Jerry Pournelle has drily pointed out, "Violence is the first resort of the competent."

The isolationist heartland of our nation, according to conventional wisdom, does not care to hear and could not understand such warnings, apart from a few policy wonks who couldn't tell a baseball diamond from a football field. Well, Phoenix, like most of the rest of Real America, took to it very well. Lady Thatcher had her audience of businessmen and -women in the homeland of Goldwaterism up and cheering.

In fact, that's why she was there. The NAI came to Phoenix at the urging of Arizona's splendid junior senator, Republican Jon Kyl, a driving force on defense issues in the mere three years he has been in the Senate.

The locale had other attractions, though the heat wasn't one of them. Phoenix is now the sixth largest urban concentration in the United States and the second fastest-growing one, behind only Las Vegas (where else?). Its growth from a population of 50,000 after World War II symbolizes to Europeans the astounding adaptability and energy of the American people.

But the interests of Arizona also reflect the degree to which the prosperity and fundamental interests of the American people require both free international trade and engaged commitment with the wider world, not to mention strong strategic defenses.

Some 80 per cent of the investment that has built up the state of Arizona comes from other nations. More of it comes from Europe than from Asia, Sen. Kyl notes in his own speech, and if U.S. deterrence of enemies with weapons of mass destruction ever falters, Phoenix is as likely as San Francisco, Boston, or Washington, D.C., to be a target because of its population concentration. That is why anti-ballistic-missile defenses are as much a necessity for this famously low-taxed state as they are for the inhabitants of the Big Apple and Tinseltown.

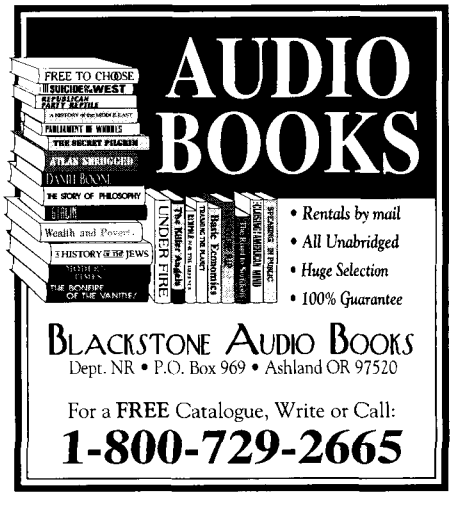
NAI is far from triumphalist. Most of the debates at the conference focus on the policy differences between the United States and its Western European partners—usually divided among themselves—on major policy issues.

This was no accident. According to NAI founder John O'Sullivan, "If the major challenges we face are going to be solved, America and its European allies are going to need each other, and that means they must also feel free to thrash out the real differences between them."

One clear difference in perception was the attitude on different sides of the Atlantic to the geopolitical implications of the rise of China. Paul Wolfowitz, former U.S. secretary of defense, saw the

(Continues on page 60)

Mr. Sieff is State Department correspondent for the Washington Times.



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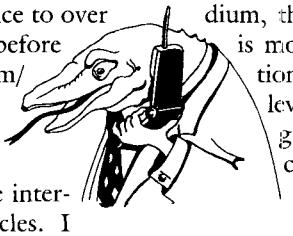
GEKKO

I'VE been bullish on palladium and the platinum/gold spread since January, and for those of you who feel comfortable dealing in the futures or options markets, those have been great plays, what with palladium soaring from $115 or so an ounce to over $170 as I write this just before Memorial Day. The platinum/gold spread has gone from a dollar or so to over $40 an ounce. There are, however, lots of people who are interested only in equity vehicles. I think there is now a way for them to take advantage of the platinum-group metals (PGM) price explosion.



While by far the biggest producers of PGMs are in South Africa and Russia, there is an American company, Stillwater Mining (NASDAQ: PGMS), that has developed a working palladium/platinum mine over the past few years. It has been public since the end of 1994, and has reached for $30 a share twice since then. But the last peak was a year ago, and while palladium (its dominant product) has had a moon shot, Stillwater stock has bobbled around in the $20–$23 range. The reason, it seems, was that three of the company's directors, who were originally nominated by a former shareholder, Manville Corporation, didn't believe the PGM boom was real. They held back on capital spending, discouraged an exchange listing, and pressed the company's management to sell most of the mine's production for this year in the forward market before the price move got going in earnest.

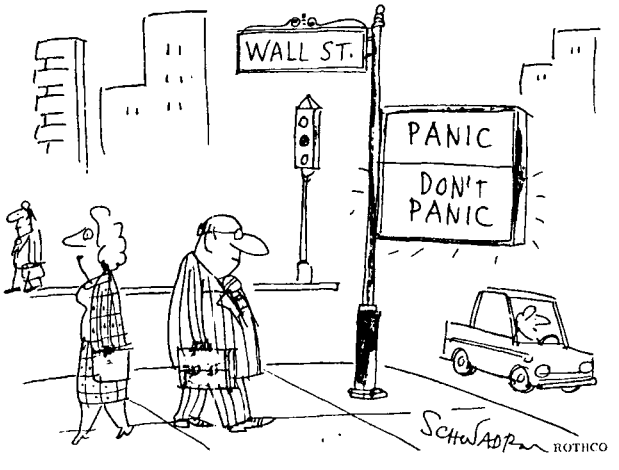
The howls of outrage from the bigger shareholders were heard even in Denver, where Stillwater makes its home. The Manville nominees, seeing the peasants approach the castle with torches and waving stock proxies on their pitchforks, resigned. A search is now on for a new CEO; four new directors are joining the board; and plans for getting listed on an exchange are being dusted off.

The question is whether this is all coming too late to catch the wave in palladium and platinum. After all, the 1997 production is largely committed at a price well below today's levels.

I don't think so. Let's take just palladium, the metal on which Stillwater is most dependent. Mine production is running at about half the level of demand, and, thanks to growth in applications such as catalytic converters for automobiles, capacitors for cellular phones, and other electronic uses, the market continues to expand. At some price, north of today's levels, there will be some substitution, but there are limits to the extent to which that can be done. The real question has been how long the Russians can or will sell palladium and platinum out of their stockpiles. They will resume shipping this year, but as one PGM holder says, "They will run out of metal. This year, next year, whenever. When they do, there aren't going to be a lot of places for the users to find it."

When Stillwater is listed, you can expect an increase in liquidity. The engineering side of the company has a pretty good rep, so the only question is when the Russians run out of stockpiles and the Stillwater CFO runs off those excessive forward sales.

■ A frequent conversation opener over the last few weeks has been: "Are you doing the baht or the koruna?"



You see, things have been quiet in Western Europe since the last big pile was made by people going long British government bonds (see Gekkos past). Fortunately, there is rarely a lack of government folly *somewhere* to bet against. The latest targets are Thailand, whose currency is the baht, and the Czech Republic, where you pay your bills with the koruna.

The Thai government has had a banking crisis followed by a run on the currency. For the moment, it has managed to hold the line on its exchange rate, which may not be such a good idea in the long run. But while Thai cabinet ministers turn over like carnival targets, the real establishment in the country is pretty secure, powerful, and not particularly sensitive to the cost to the public of the government's currency defense.

This is not true in the Czech Republic, which is a smaller place than Thailand but, at this moment, more politically influential. The Czech koruna is a pretty good target, because the Czech government is almost certainly going to be forced into a devaluation by the fall. It might be possible to postpone or even avoid a cheapening of the currency, but an insecure government and a far-from-passive electorate mean that the price won't be paid.

So who cares? I mean apart from my speculator pals? The answer is that the Czech devaluation will add to the pressure on the French and German governments to let Italy into the Euro club when the currency is supposed to be issued in 1999. Because if Italy isn't let into the Euro bloc, it could devalue the lira to relieve the pressure on its finances—just as the Czechs are doing.

The overall effect will be to weaken the Euro from the outset. So don't bet against the dollar in the long run. Not that our budget deal is a good one, and not that Alan Greenspan is God. But we're a lot better off than our competitors in the rich countries.

■ I have been mightily encouraged by the victories of the Taliban Muslim fundamentalists in Afghanistan, which promised to upset the Greater Russian imperialists and bring an American pipeline project one step closer to reality. As we go to press the Talibans have suffered a reverse, but don't give up on them yet.

—JOHN DIZARD

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Growing Pains

As NATO expansion goes forward, many questions—especially concerning Russia—remain unanswered.

CHARLES GATI

THIS July, at the NATO summit in Madrid, the first phase of the NATO enlargement process will end. While public opinion in Western Europe is less supportive of enlargement than it was a year ago, NATO is set to invite Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and possibly Slovenia to join the alliance in 1999. In the corridors at Madrid, participants will debate the pros and cons of inviting Rumania as well.

Unless the United States hesitates or Western public opinion turns far more negative than it is now, the parliaments of Western Europe and Canada will ratify NATO's decision without excessive debate. In the U.S., it is too early to tell how members of the Senate will vote on the issue. Some will be influenced by various objections that have been voiced:

—The NATO–Russia Founding Act will bring Moscow too close to NATO.

—Enlargement will harm Russia's democratic prospects.

—The cost is prohibitive.

—Europe will remain divided, with countries between Russia and the new NATO ending up in a "grey zone."

—The European Union, not NATO, is the proper vehicle for enhancing European stability.

More broadly, however, two basic questions will shape the outcome of the Senate's vote:

First, will the White House succeed in keeping together the diverse coalition currently in favor of enlargement?

Second, will the three (or more) candidate countries succeed in reinforcing the impression that they can become reliable members ready to make a contribution to the alliance?

The Bush Administration and initially the Clinton Administration were unprepared to embrace the idea of enlargement when Russian opposition was still weak and unfocused. However, the Clinton Administration, backed by Congress, made excellent use of the period 1994–96 to convince itself and our European allies of the benefits for the West and indeed the historic significance of enlargement. The Administration's diplomacy has greatly surpassed early expectations: the alliance is now united behind U.S. policy. Moreover, even during this preparatory phase, Central Europe responded positively to the prospect of joining NATO. The recent treaties between Germany and the Czech Republic, and between Hungary and Rumania, speak for themselves.

Still, the main strategic goal of enlargement has yet to be specified. Lack of clarity is a serious problem because public opinion remains confused, and critics have found it easy to magnify the actual or presumed side-effects of enlargement. Yet the Administration's vagueness has been a political necessity as well: it has served to make enlargement attractive to a very diverse coalition of supporters.

Consider the composition of the coalition. It includes former opponents who support it now because the Administration's commitments have put America's and NATO's credibility on the line. Under the circumstances, they note, even postponing implementation would be more damaging than pursuing it. As for the original coalition, it is made up of people who fall generally into one or more of the following categories:

a) *Geopolitical Atlanticists*, who say enlargement will give NATO a new lease on life, including for the mission of maintaining security in Central Europe;

b) *Idealistic revisionists*, who say enlargement is an effective mechanism for gradually undoing the postwar division of Europe and the "Yalta system";

c) *Hopeful Russophiles*, who say enlargement will bring Russia closer to NATO through the Founding Act (for-

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ILLUSTRATION BY ROMAN GENN

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merly known as the "Russia Charter") and make Moscow a helpful partner in European security;

d) *Hardline Russophobes*, who say, conversely, that enlargement will help contain Russian ambitions.

During the first phase of the enlargement process, the Administration has paid immense attention to the Russophiles. This approach has had the positive effects of solidifying Western European support for enlargement and helping to calm Russian nerves. It has probably also brought on board some Senate Democrats worried about the anti-Russian undertones of enlargement. On the other hand, the negative consequence of this approach is that other members of the pro-enlargement coalition may be so discouraged by what they regard as the Administration's concessions to Moscow as to re-examine their inclination to favor ratification. Concerned about "putting the charter before the horse," they are opposed to what they see as the dilution of NATO. Worse, they expect Moscow to challenge NATO's effectiveness with renewed fervor after signing the Founding Act.

Is the main strategic goal of enlargement the strengthening of NATO's role in Europe, or is it the creation of a new NATO in which Russia will exercise undue influence?

After Madrid, the Administration will presumably tilt its rationale for enlargement by appealing to the Atlanticists, the revisionists, and to some extent the Russophobes. If so, talk of Moscow's "constructive participation" in NATO's various councils will be placed on the back burner. The Administration will assert, more clearly than it has done so far, that the main goal of enlargement is to enhance European security and stability by strengthening NATO and by gradually undoing the "Yalta system." By shifting its focus from Russia to NATO's role in Central Europe, the Administration will also stress that enlargement is intended neither to confront nor to appease Russia.

The political reason for making the case for enlargement this way is that the Republicans in the Senate, together with a few like-minded Democrats, are more skeptical of Russia than the Administration is. They are apprehensive about any lingering remnants of the "Russia First" policy that they attacked with considerable fervor in 1993–94. To them the decision to have the Founding Act signed and sealed in May, prior to Madrid, is already cause for alarm. They want to put the horse before the charter. And their support is the necessary condition of ratification.

Above all, the Senate will want to be assured that an enlarged NATO will not resemble the old Soviet idea of a "pan-European" security order. First proposed as early as the mid 1950s and then advanced with some fanfare by Mikhail Gorbachev, who pressed for something called "our common European home," the idea was but a thinly veiled device to reduce NATO's dominant role in European security. Given the multitude of seemingly overlapping councils and committees the Founding Act contemplates—some such councils to include, some to exclude, Russian representatives—it is difficult to ascertain how substantial Moscow's "voice" will be in Brussels. In any case, it would be the supreme irony of recent history if a weak Russia achieved a historic goal that a strong Soviet Union failed at.

At the heart of the coming debate, then, is the question of whether the Founding Act is a legitimate compromise of NATO's and Moscow's interests or by contrast a series of excessive American concessions. Is it, as Zbigniew Brzezinski put it so well before the fine print became available, accommodation or appeasement?

After Madrid, the Russian connection will be more closely scrutinized. At that time, the Administration will have to attempt to come to terms with the central substantive question: Is the main strategic goal of enlargement the strengthening of NATO's role in Europe by the addition of capable new members, or is it the creation of a "new NATO" in which Russia will exercise undue influence—having only a "voice," to be sure, not a "veto"—over major decisions? The answer to that question depends on the Administration's interpretation of the Founding Act and on the Senate's interpretation of its purposefully ambiguous language. Given the diverse pro-enlargement coalition, that ambiguity may turn out to be the Act's greatest strength—or its greatest weakness.

ANOTHER question—secondary but not unimportant—to be debated then is whether Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic are qualified for membership.

What are the criteria by which they will be judged? If significant progress toward political pluralism and the free market are the proper qualifications, then the choice of these three countries makes good sense (though little Slovenia may be ahead of them all, and Estonia too should have been considered). If geopolitical space and actual or prospective military preparedness enhancing NATO's power are the criteria, then the three invitees (and possibly Rumania) represent good value.

While NATO is thus making the right choice by inviting Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to apply for membership, questions will be raised about the Communist legacy in Central Europe, particularly in Hungary and Poland, where ex-Communists play a decisive role in coalition governments. In fact, these governments are pursuing very painful and unpopular economic reforms that their political rivals on the Right often oppose. Hospitable to Western investors, they are also determined and enthusiastic applicants to NATO, accepting its rules, including civilian control of the military. And the idea of joining NATO enjoys immense popularity in Poland, while in Hungary all seven political parties represented in parliament favor membership. Joining NATO is equally popular in the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and for that matter Rumania too. As for the ex-Communists of Poland and Hungary, they may be voted out in national elections that will be held before their countries are to join NATO in 1999.

That said, some attention should be paid—as NATO is reportedly doing—to continuity in military and intelligence personnel. Bluntly put, can those who once served the Warsaw Pact, and thus Moscow, protect NATO's secrets?

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The issue is not so much the present orientation of an elected president or prime minister; such people's pro-Western credentials have been tested in the post-1989 political arena. Many of their aides have also had the opportunity to show—for ten long years, by 1999—that in their view too NATO membership is the best guarantee of their countries' independence from Russia. Moreover, since few people in the old anti-Communist opposition have the background to serve as generals or intelligence officers, NATO must be patient toward some continuity for a few years.

Yet, as the Senate may well raise this issue, it behooves the candidate members to provide for transparency in personnel when it comes to their ambassadors as well as military and intelligence liaisons assigned to Brussels and NATO capitals. These positions should not be held by leading members of the old Communist *nomenklatura*, whose loyalty to NATO invites skepticism. Only this way can the new members show that, despite the necessary continuity in personnel, their ties with the past have been conclusively cut. Meanwhile, NATO should consider additional options to assure confidentiality in its dealings with the Central Europeans. One possibility is for clearances to be approved initially not only by national boards, which is the current practice, but by a joint NATO-appointed committee. After all, NATO will still have secrets to protect.

After the details of enlargement and Russia's new relationship with the alliance are clarified, and the invitees make a few minor but bona-fide efforts to ensure NATO's trust, the second phase of enlargement will reach a successful conclusion in 1999. At that time Democrats and Republicans should congratulate themselves for acting together to advance the twin causes of security and freedom in Europe. Together, they—we—will have been present at the creation. As for the Poles, Hungarians, and Czechs, they will operate in a security environment conducive to the advancement of their democratic aspirations.

BETWEEN now and then, different factions in the pro-enlargement coalition should hold their fire, not because every detail is just right but because keeping the coalition together is essential. All the skeptics have a point: the Atlanticists about NATO's dilution, the revisionists about the Baltics' and others' being left in the grey zone, the Russophiles about harming Russia's democratic prospects, and the Russophobes about accepting the new members only in 1999 while signing the Founding Act now—and thus bringing Moscow close to NATO at once.

Although there are reasons for all to complain, then, there are also compelling reasons to refrain from hyperbole. The Founding Act is largely a declaration of intent; enlargement, supported by a coalition of strange political bedfellows, is about to become a fact. Under the circumstances, tolerance of different rationales in defense of the expansion of liberty is no vice. □

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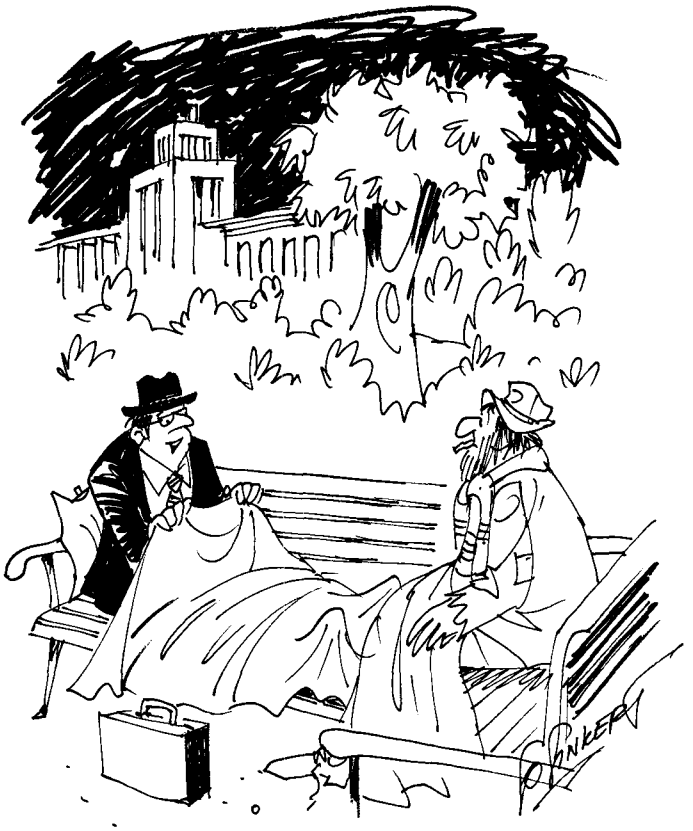
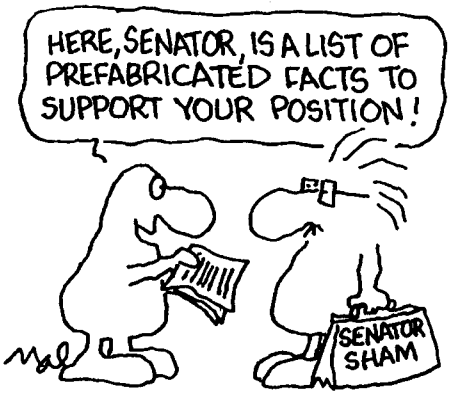
In Friedrichshafen, where the old count flew
Above and in Lake Constance in '02,
A Zeppelin looms hugely in a shed.
At Boeing, no one's falling out of bed,
But those for whom "The Road to Mandalay"
Means hankie time when paddles chunk the bay
Pine for a pianola pumped by Mom
And letters signed, Sincerely—not dot com.

—W. H. VON DREELE



"Other than expense accounts, they're not a bad company to work for."

"Mel's life has been a series of suprises. Here comes one now."



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"Come to think of it, I can't recall the last time I saw any *children."*

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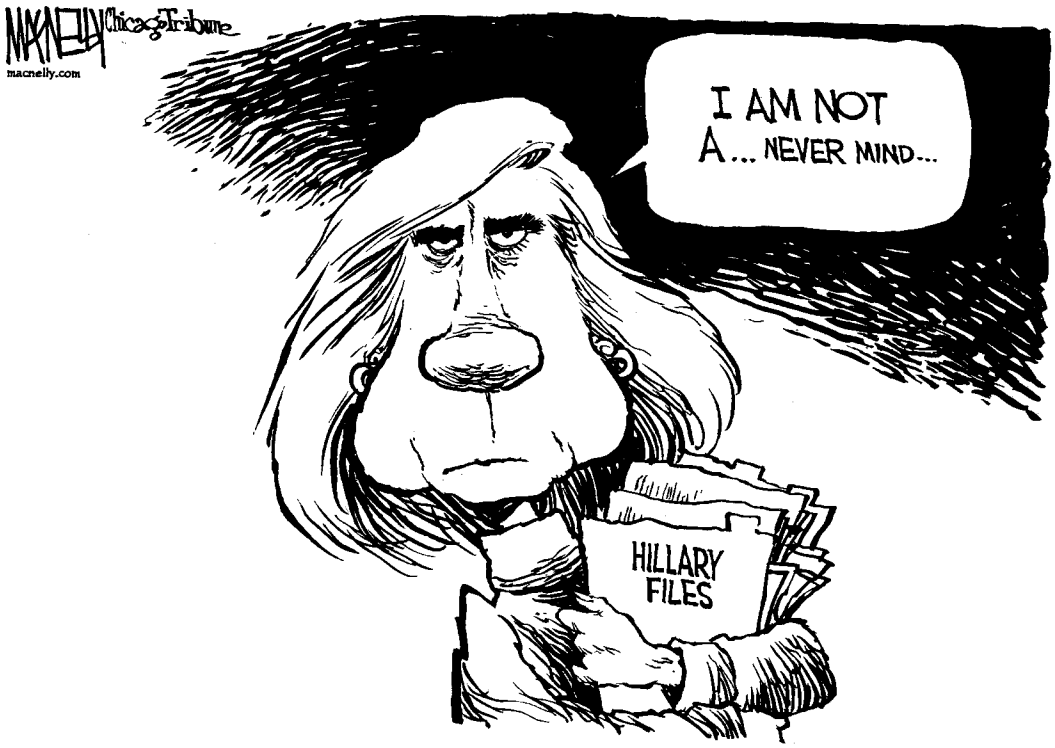

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The immigration issue is the sleeping giant of politics. Mass immigration is transforming America in ways most Americans dislike; yet the political parties refuse to discuss it in front of the voters. Welfare/multiculturalism/illegal immigration is the problem, run the mantras, not legal immigration. These illusions are analyzed in the pages that follow. The task of analysis has been made easier by the amount of information now available. The San Francisco Examiner *and the* Washington Post *have recently run major articles on the deleterious impact of mass immigration on schools, the labor market and—not least—on the immigrants themselves. Academic research has exploded its comforting myths. Popular discontent is rising over such consequences as the spread of bilingualism and the increased fiscal burden on native-born Americans. If the GOP continues to deny them, it will make itself irrelevant even before the impact of immigration on America's demography does so.*

Electing a New People

PETER BRIMELOW & ED RUBENSTEIN

DEMOGRAPHY is destiny in American politics. This point was made brilliantly almost exactly thirty years ago, by Kevin Phillips in *The Emerging Republican Majority* (1968). In the shadow of the Democrats' long-dominant "Roosevelt coalition," and amid the wreckage and recrimination of the disastrous Goldwater defeat, Phillips boldly predicted a generation of Republican victories based on the persistent but dynamic pattern of ethnic politics. He has been triumphantly vindicated.

But the Republican hour is rapidly drawing to a close. Not because the "Phillips Coalition" of the West and the South, of the middle class and urban blue-collar voters, is breaking up in the traditional manner. Instead, it is being drowned—as a direct result of the 1965 Immigration Act, which ironically became effective in the year Phillips's book was published. Nine-tenths of the immigrant influx is from groups with significant—sometimes overwhelming—Democratic propensities. After thirty years, their numbers are reaching critical mass. And there is no end in sight.

To estimate the future impact of immigration, we took the 1988 presidential race, in which George Bush beat Michael Dukakis with 53 per cent of the vote. This figure happens also to be the average vote received by the Republicans in presidential elections since 1968—the largest advantage won by any party over any six elections in American history. And it is the vote received by Republicans in 1994, when they took control of the Senate and House. It can reasonably be regarded as the Republican high-water mark.

Then we lowered this high-water mark by accounting for the shifting ethnic balance that the Census projects will result from immigration, assuming that the ethnic groups continued to vote as they did in 1988. The results are startling (see table below). Even if the Republicans can again win their 1988 level of support in each ethnic group—which they have miserably failed to do against Bill Clinton—they have at most two presidential cycles left. Then they go inexorably into minority status, beginning in 2008.

PROJECTED REPUBLICAN VOTE (%) IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION YEARS

Year	Republican Share (%)	% of the Voting Age Population White	Black	Latino	Asian
1988A	53%	78.8%	10.7%	7.4%	3.15%
		Estimates:			
2000	50.7	74.4	11.3	10.0	4.3
2004	50.3	73.0	11.4	10.8	4.8
2008	49.9	71.6	11.6	11.7	5.1
2012	49.5	70.2	11.7	12.6	5.5
2016	49.1	68.8	11.8	13.5	5.9
2020	48.7	67.3	12.0	14.4	6.3
2024	48.3	65.8	12.1	15.6	6.5
2028	47.8	64.3	12.2	16.6	6.9
2032	47.4	62.8	12.3	17.6	7.3
2036	47.0	61.3	12.4	18.6	7.7
2040	46.5	59.8	12.5	19.7	8.0
2044	46.0	57.8	12.6	20.7	8.9
2048	45.7	56.9	12.7	21.2	9.2
2052	45.3	54.9	12.9	21.6	10.6

Note: Republican share held at 1988 level for each group, i.e.: White 59%; Black 12%; Latino 23%; Asian 47%; Assumed Voter participation rate: White 64%; Black 54%; Latino 54%; Asian 54%
Source: Based on Census Bureau Population projections

Indeed, looking at the electorate in this cold-eyed Phillipsian way suggests a reinterpretation of recent history. On this reading, America turned to the Republicans, not because it was convinced by the compelling logic of free-market economics and the capital-gains tax cut, but because the Democratic Party "tipped," like a housing project. Amazingly, no Democratic presidential nominee has received a majority of the white vote since 1948, with the aberrational exception of Lyndon B. Johnson. As liberal commentators Tom and Mary Edsall pointed out in their book *Chain Reaction*, whites seem to have left a party that they perceived as becoming alien and even hostile to them.

This caused a seismic shift to the Republicans, which is still not complete. But if whites fled the Democratic Party, it is now coming after them. In the years to come, the new Democratic trend will overwhelm the old Republican one—assuming mass immigration continues.

Any projections of this kind, of course, are problematical. We have necessarily made drastic assumptions. We assume that the Asian and Hispanic voting rate increases—but only to that of blacks, which seems reasonable. We assume that the Republican share of the Hispanic vote remains low—but we also assume near-parity in the Asian vote, which, given the hard-left "Asian" leadership now emerging on the campuses, especially for Chinese, may be optimistic. We assume that Republicans do not increase their share of the white vote—but, since the current congressional leadership refuses to voice white concerns over such matters as immigration and affirmative action, this seems all too probable.

Whether our projections are too optimistic or pessimistic is ultimately irrelevant. The fundamental point, which

Mr. Brimelow, a senior editor at Forbes *and at* NR, *is the author of* Alien Nation.
Mr. Rubenstein is NR's *economics editor.*

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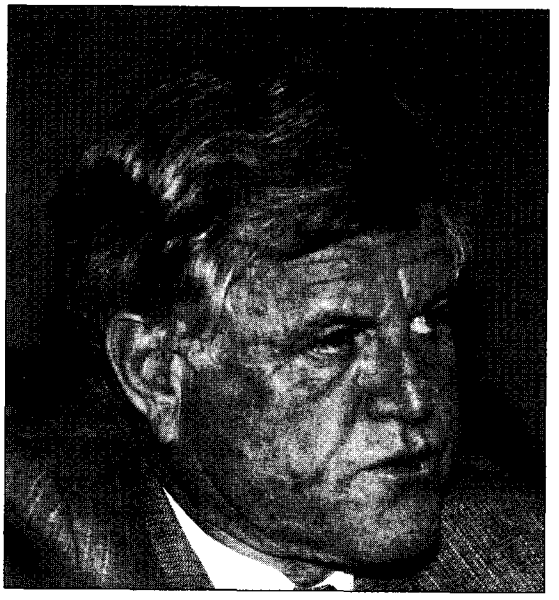
IMMIGRATION:

Kennedy got it half right.

> ***"First, our cities will not be flooded with a million immigrants annually.... Secondly, the ethnic mix of this country will not be upset."***
>
> Senator Edward M. Kennedy, during debate on the immigration bill, 1965.



Senator Kennedy's first prediction was right. Our cities are not being flooded by a million immigrants annually. They're being flooded by **a million and a half immigrants annually!**

What has this meant for those cities?

- Schools that can't educate.
- Loss of middle class jobs and wages.
- Overpopulation and crowded housing.
- Staggering government costs.

Senator Kennedy's second prediction was totally wrong. Whole cities and even regions of our country have been completely transformed by immigration during the past 30 years.

What has this meant for those regions?

- Multiculturalism.
- Multilingualism.
- Increasing ethnic tensions.
- Middle-class flight.

If you think that 30 years of mass immigration is enough, **you're not alone.** More than 8 out of 10 Americans want immigration drastically reduced or stopped altogether.

To find out how you can make your voice heard, call **FAIR** at **1–800–395–0890.**

FAIR

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does not seem to have dawned yet on the Beltway Right, remains the same: *The trend is not our friend.* In this perspective, the decision of congressional Republicans in 1996 to run away from the immigration cuts recommended by the bipartisan Jordan Commission can only be described as, well, brave.

There is much bluster, notably by the incorrigible *Wall Street Journal* editorial page, to the effect that the GOP can win more Hispanic votes. But at the very best this will be an uphill struggle. Hispanics do indeed move rightward the longer they remain in America. But this effect is canceled out by newly arrived immigrants who overwhelmingly vote Democratic. Hence, directly because of immigration the GOP has never approached a majority of the Hispanic vote. And this shows no sign of changing any time soon.

The latest alleged portent: the laudable victory of Rev. Bill Redmond in the recent New Mexico special election for the House seat vacated by UN Ambassador Bill Richardson. A more careful reading of this result, however, leads (not for the first time) to the conclusion that immigration enthusiasts can't count. The Republican vote, 42 per cent, was barely above its previous peak and well short of a majority. What happened was that the Democratic vote was split, by a former Democrat running as the candidate of New Mexico's enviro-Stalinist Green Party, who got 17 per cent of the vote. This, and not a mass conversion of Hispanics, won the seat. Rep. Redmond will do well to hold it in 1998.

In fact, the New Mexico race does presage the future, albeit in ways unforeseen by the *Wall Street Journal*. It shows the power of independent candidates to hurt major-party candidates by splitting the vote—and immigration, as evidenced in countries as far apart as France and Australia, is pre-eminently an issue that, if ignored by establishment parties, provokes insurrection. Not coincidentally, the rumored Michigan candidacy of ophthalmologist Dr. John Tanton, the chairman of Federation for American Immigration Reform, against Republican Sen. Spencer Abraham has been getting front-page treatment in the state's heavily Democratic media. Other such single-issue candidacies are being mentioned—for example, a 1998 challenge to Republican Arizona Sen. John McCain by Robert D. Park, leader of the state's successful Official English referendum campaign in 1988.

New Mexico may presage the future also in that the Democrats split—apparently a worldly Hispanic machine was pitted against Anglo leftist loonies. The vast complication of ethnic politics brought about by current immigration policy may, in the end, undermine both parties. Politics will presumably continue. But not American politics as we have known and loved it.

Maybe some supply-sider or neoconservative can get elected to something in 2050, borne along by a multicultural throng like Tarzan on a litter. But, as always with immigration—particularly since the National Academy of Sciences has confirmed that there is no significant aggregate economic benefit (See "The Week")—the question must be: Why take the risk? □

Immigration & Welfare

Solving the welfare problem will solve the welfare problem—not the immigration problem.

GEORGE J. BORJAS

I BEGAN to investigate the link between immigration and welfare in 1987. Since that time, I have given countless presentations at universities and think tanks. Invariably, someone will come up after the seminar and say something like: "I believe the data and I agree with you that there is a problem. But the problem is not immigration; the problem is welfare." This response has recently been enshrined by Cato Institute analysts as their rallying cry against the accumulating evidence on immigrant use of welfare: "Immigration Yes, Welfare No!"

When I first heard this response a decade ago, it struck me as odd. Yes, there are things that are wrong with the welfare system. But if the social experimentation of the past few decades has taught us anything, it is that we have no clue about how to tackle poverty. In view of our resounding defeat in the War on Poverty, why would we consciously pursue policies—such as our current immigration policy—that exacerbate poverty?

Today's immigrants are more likely to receive welfare than natives and than earlier immigrants. In 1970, the Census indicated that immigrant households were *less* likely to receive cash benefits (such as AFDC, SSI, or General Assistance) than native households. By 1990, the Census showed that immigrants were *more* likely to receive cash benefits than native households. In fact, if one adds non-cash programs (such as Medicaid, Food Stamps, and housing assistance), it turns out that 21 per cent of immigrant households receive some type of aid, as compared to 14 per cent of native households and 10 per cent of white non-Hispanic native households. In short, the "welfare gap" between immigrants and natives has reversed direction and grown substantially in a very short time.

Why did immigrant use of welfare rise so rapidly? It's elementary: today's immigrants are relatively less skilled than those who came two or three decades ago. Since the enactment of the 1965 Amendments, the United States has been granting entry visas to persons who have relatives in the United States, with no regard to their skills or economic potential. Immigrants who arrived in the mid to late 1960s entered the U.S. labor market with a wage disadvantage of about 17 per cent; today's immigrants enter with a wage disadvantage of about 32 per cent. In the 1960s, the economic adaptation experienced by immigrants as they found out about job opportunities and learned to speak English guaranteed that the initial 17 per cent wage gap would disappear within a couple of decades. If today's immigrants have the same rate of adaptation as earlier immigrants, we can expect that they will have a wage disadvantage of about

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15 per cent throughout much of their working lives. The inherently unstable combination of unskilled immigration and a generous welfare state has brought us to the current situation.

THE geographic clustering of immigrants in the United States is remarkable. In 1990, three-quarters of the immigrants lived in only six states. This clustering has created a mosaic of ethnic neighborhoods or enclaves in some American cities, and has fostered the creation and growth of ethnic networks that transmit information about life in these United States to potential migrants in the source countries.

Do these ethnic networks provide information about welfare programs to new immigrants? Case studies of the Russian and Chinese communities leave little doubt that they do. Russian- and Chinese-language newspapers print detailed reports about the application process and eligibility requirements for particular programs. There are "Dear Abby"–style columns in newspapers to help readers with welfare problems. And bookstores in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States sell a Chinese-language book that contains a 36-page guide to SSI and other benefits.

Network effects probably grew in importance as the networks became more established. It is well known that "take-up" rates (i.e., the fraction of eligible persons who actually receive benefits from a particular welfare program) are well below 100 per cent. As the ethnic networks expanded, the take-up rates of immigrants probably increased.

The welfare state can also have a magnetic effect on immigrants. Welfare programs in the United States, though not generous by Western European standards, stack up pretty well when compared to the standard of living available in most of the world's less-developed countries. While it is true that many immigrants come to the United States for job opportunities, decades of economic research into the determinants of migration decisions have demonstrated that it is potential *income* that is the significant factor. And the welfare state provides a lot of income opportunities, especially for persons with few skills. As a result, the question is not whether magnetic effects exist—they do. Rather, the question is whether these magnetic effects are numerically important.

Three different types of magnetic effects influence immigrant behavior. It is possible that welfare programs attract persons who otherwise would not have migrated to the United States. This is the magnetic effect most people have in mind, but is also the one about which there is least empirical evidence.

Second, the safety net might also discourage immigrants who "fail" in the United States from returning to their home countries. A recent study (by economists Randall Olsen and Patricia Regan of Ohio State University) provides the first hint of such a magnetic effect by showing that the probability of out-migration is greatly reduced if the household receives public assistance in the United States.

Finally, magnetic effects arise from the huge disparities between different states' welfare benefits. In 1970, California's AFDC benefit level was only 68 per cent that of the median state; twenty years later it was 2.5 times that of the median state. By 1990, California's benefit package was the second most generous in the nation (surpassed only by Alaska's). It turns out that the fraction of new immigrants *not on welfare* who chose to live in California dropped between 1980 and 1990, from 30.1 to 28.9 per cent. But the fraction of new immigrants *on welfare* who chose to live in California rose sharply, from 36.9 to 45.4 per cent. The evidence, therefore, suggests a clustering effect upon immigrant welfare recipients as California's benefit level rose above that of other states.

Today's immigrants are relatively less skilled than those who came two or three decades ago.

The existence of ethnic networks and magnetic effects implies that immigrants respond to variations in welfare benefits. As a result, it should not be too surprising that the welfare problem in the immigrant population has grown considerably in the past two decades.

In 1996, after years of concern over the link between welfare and immigration, Congress included a number of immigrant-related provisions in the welfare-reform bill. According to the Congressional Budget Office, almost half of the $54-billion savings in this legisla-

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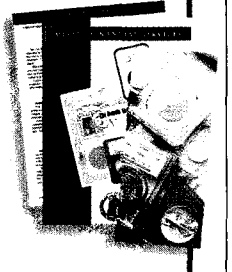

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tion can be traced directly to the restrictions on immigrant use of welfare. The welfare-reform bill banned most types of assistance for immigrants who would enter the country after August 22, 1996 (with the ban being lifted when the immigrants become citizens), and it mandated that most non-citizens present in the country on August 22, 1996, be kicked off the SSI and Food Stamp rolls within a year. The welfare-reform legislation was a capitulation by Congress to the idea that the problem was indeed welfare, not immigration.

Congress was wrong, however. Even before the ink dried the rumblings had begun that the restrictions on immigrant use of welfare were onerous, inhumane, and unjust. The immigrant provisions brought together a number of powerful interest groups all of which lobbied hard for their repeal. Governors and mayors could read between the lines of the welfare-reform bill: Hundreds of thousands of current (and future) immigrants on the federal payroll would, more likely than not, become charges of state and local governments. After all, someone would have to bear the costs of supporting the disabled, many of whom are elderly and not employable. Immigrant-rights organizations stressed the unfairness of a piece of legislation that made no provision for legal immigrants who had paid their taxes, had been eligible to be drafted, and had contributed in many other ways to U.S. economic life. Finally, as the shutting-off date approaches, the ever-alert media have begun airing case studies of very ill immigrants who received letters from the Social Security Administration notifying them that their benefits would be cut off within months.

Not surprisingly, it seems as if these interest groups will carry the day. Congress has already voted to extend the deadline for cutting off SSI benefits to the disabled. And many of the restrictions on immigrant use of public assistance will probably be repealed. An important component of the budget agreement reached recently between the Republicans in Congress and President Clinton allocates funds for the provision of aid to disabled non-citizens.

The unraveling of this major piece of social legislation teaches us many lessons. No one much disputes the fact that immigrant use of social benefits grew rapidly in the past three decades. So it is hard to argue that the restrictions on immigrants in the welfare-reform bill were based on faulty analysis or data. Congress saw an actual problem—rising welfare use by immigrants—and tried to do something about it.

Our political system finds it difficult, if not impossible, to dismantle any part of the safety net protecting the economically disadvantaged, no matter how serious may be the intended consequences of that safety net. It is all but unimaginable that the day will come when TV cameras will record for posterity the instant an immigrant Alzheimer patient loses his SSI benefits, is evicted from his apartment or nursing home, and ends up wandering aimlessly around the streets of his neighborhood.

IT is irresponsible to dismiss the problems associated with welfare and immigration by passing the blame off on the welfare state—and by asserting that we could solve the problem by repealing all the programs that make up the welfare state. It is far from clear that the removal of immigrants from the welfare rolls today would generate *long-run* budgetary savings—particularly for those programs where the welfare state remains active, such as the provision of emergency medical care to the needy. Pre-natal care, for instance, is far cheaper than the cost we would have to bear when an immigrant woman who had not seen an obstetrician arrived at a hospital emergency room to deliver her baby. Put differently, the cost of providing last-minute services to immigrants could easily exceed the cost of putting them on a "retainer" through welfare benefits.

My point is simple: It is unclear that we want to bear the political, social, and economic costs of removing immigrants *already* in the United States from the welfare rolls. That does not mean that we give up on reforming the immigration system. But we must adapt our immigration policy to this political reality. In the end, it will be much easier *and* cheaper to reduce the welfare costs of immigration not by "ending welfare as we know it," but by reforming immigration policy.

If we truly want to reduce the number of immigrants on the welfare rolls, we will have to restrict immigrant access to the welfare system at the point where the restrictions are most likely to be effective and stick—at the point of entry. We must accept the fact that the consequences of the misguided immigration policies that we pursued in the past three decades are here to stay. Sunk costs, as economists say, are sunk.

What types of point-of-entry restrictions might we want to consider? It is obvious, it has been said before, but it is worth saying again. Immigrant use of welfare programs would be greatly reduced if we improved the skill composition of the immigrant flow. It makes a great deal of economic sense to restrict the entry of persons who will probably become public charges. We could set up a point system—*à la* Canada—where the success of a visa application would depend not only on whether the applicant had relatives in the United States, but also on the applicant's education, age, occupation, and job prospects. The point system would also nullify the influence of ethnic networks or magnets in generating excess use of welfare programs by immigrants.

In the absence of such point-of-entry restrictions, some states have begun to take unilateral actions that weaken the link between immigration and welfare within their borders. The welfare-reform bill gives states much more leeway in setting benefit levels. States will now compete when setting welfare benefits. Immigrant-receiving states, such as California, have a huge incentive to race to the bottom in benefits as they attempt to reduce the fiscal burden imposed by the immigration of less-skilled workers.

It is remarkable that while the heated debate over the relationship between welfare and immigration dominates the public arena, a consensus has evolved that the gains from immigration to the U.S. economy as a whole

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A Message from Negative Population Growth, Inc.

Why We Must Reduce Immigration From Over One Million to 100,000 a Year

It Makes No Sense for Our Nation to Permit Massive Immigration

We now allow over one million immigrants to settle here every year. If our fertility rate remains at 2.0, continuing immigration at that level would swell our population to nearly 500 million before the end of the next century. **That would almost double our present size!**

Such growth would be intolerable. It would destroy our environment, our standard of living and the quality of our lives.

With a present population of 266 million, our country is already vastly overpopulated in terms of the long range carrying capacity of its resources and environment. Yet we continue to grow rapidly, by 25 to 30 million each decade.

We Need to Halt and Then Reverse Our Population Growth

We at NPG believe that our goal should be to stabilize our U.S. population at no more than 150 million, its size back in 1950. We consider that to be the optimum size for our country.

We Americans do not have to agree now on the exact size of a smaller population, however, since any substantial reduction in numbers would take many decades to achieve. It is only essential that we agree on the urgent need to halt and reverse our population growth.

Immigration Must Be Drastically Reduced

Because we have allowed our nation to become seriously overpopulated we are in deep trouble. A quick and easy solution simply does not exist. To start on the path toward a smaller, more sustainable population, we must halt illegal immigration and sharply reduce legal immigration.

Accordingly, NPG strongly recommends that legal immigration be cut back from its present 900,000 per year to no more than 100,000, including all relatives, refugees and asylees. We further call for an all-out effort to reduce illegal immigration, currently estimated at over 300,000 a year, to as near zero as possible.

Best Case Scenario: Low Fertility, Low Immigration

What would happen to our population if our fertility rate were gradually reduced from the present 2.0 to 1.5 by 2050, if illegal immigration were virtually halted, and if legal immigration were reduced in 1997 from the present 900,000 a year to 100,000 a year, as we advocate?

The bad news is that our population would still continue growing for another 25 years, peaking at 300 million in 2020. The good news is that by the end of the next century it would have declined to around 180 million. In a few more decades it would reach 150 million and could be stabilized at that level, even allowing a slight increase in fertility and/or immigration.

This is the path to a smaller population that NPG advocates.

Another Scenario: Low Fertility, High Immigration

If our fertility were reduced as in the "best case" scenario, but immigration remained at its present high level, the picture would be far worse.

1. Our population would continue growing for another 55 years, peaking in 2050 at 337 million, 70 million more than we are now. Our impact on the environment would accordingly be that much greater.

2. Even by the end of the next century, our population would still be 298 million, 32 million greater than it is today, and 121 million larger than it would be under the "best case" low immigration scenario.

This is a path that our nation cannot afford to follow. Clearly, the level of immigration will have a tremendous influence on the eventual size of our population.

We Cannot Rely on Fertility Decline Alone to Reverse Our Population Growth

Fertility rates are difficult to change and when they do change, they almost always do so very slowly. Furthermore, future fertility rates are unpredictable: they might well increase rather than decrease. Over the last twenty years, for example, the trend has been upward, from a low of 1.7 in 1976 to 2.0 in the last few years.

That is all the more reason why we must reduce immigration to a level consistent with our long-term national interest. Reducing immigration is a much faster and more certain way to get results than relying on fertility decline.

If we can persuade our government to act decisively NOW to halt illegal immigration and to cut legal immigration from 900,000 to 100,000 a year — we will at last be doing something to brake runaway population growth in our country.

If you believe with us that immigration must be drastically curbed — and without further delay — then we ask you to work for this goal as a member of Negative Population Growth.

To find out more about how you can work toward a smaller and more sustainable United States population, contact us at (202) 667-8950 or by e-mail at npg@npg.org.

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are small. The National Academy of Sciences reports that immigration generates a net gain for U.S. natives of at most $10 billion annually, or about $120 per native household in the United States. At the same time, however, the National Academy reports that immigration imposes a $1,174 annual fiscal burden on the typical native household in California, and a $229 annual fiscal burden on the typical native household in New Jersey.

We still have not really addressed the problems introduced by rising use of welfare benefits in the immigrant population, and the debate over the welfare-reform bill indicates that we will not solve these problems until we tackle the much larger question of what type of immigration policy the United States should pursue. □

California, Here We Come

IMMIGRATION optimism abounds among pundits and politicians—and understandably. America over time has absorbed countless immigrants. But as official reports and demographic trends reveal, immigrants are becoming America's new underclass.

On April 8, the Bureau of the Census released a report entitled, *The Foreign-Born Population: 1996*. It is sobering. Median personal income for immigrants is $14,772, compared to $17,835 for natives. The poverty rate for the foreign-born is 22.2 per cent, in contrast to the native rate of 12.9 per cent. And among children the numbers are worse. In 1993, 41 per cent of immigrant children lived in poverty, as compared to 22 per cent of native children. Most troubling of all is that 35.6 per cent of immigrants are *not* high-school graduates, versus only 16 per cent of natives.

Moreover, the number of new immigrants who lack education and skills is not declining; it is growing. Primary causes are the continued flow of illegal aliens and a family-reunification policy which admits more than half a million immigrant relatives yearly without regard to their educational attainment.

Many people resist the connection between immigration and these negative trends—but it is clear. Thus the Census Bureau released its annual poverty statistics in September 1996, showing that between 1994 and 1995, the median household income of blacks increased by 3.6 per cent, while Hispanic household income *declined* by 5.1 per cent. And over the longer period 1990 to 1995, when the poverty population increased by 2.8 million, Hispanics accounted for 90 per cent of the increase and Asians for 20 per cent. (This adds up to more than 100 per cent because the poverty of other groups declined.)

Sometimes the confusion seems deliberate. In September 1996, the Census Bureau released a report entitled *School Enrollment—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students*. Data showed that between 1974 and 1994, when elementary- and high-school enrollment declined by 565,000 students, Hispanic enrollment nonetheless increased by 3,048,000, black enrollment by 767,000, and other races (mostly Asians) by 1,650,000. How so? The answer is that white enrollment declined by 6 million.

In the report, just below the table containing these figures, is the statement that enrollment growth results from echo boom "which was due primarily to the entrance of 'baby boom' women (born 1946–1964) into their prime childbearing years." Again, did no one wonder why the baby-boomers, almost all of them either white or black, had Hispanic and Asian children?

Income Range	Native	Foreign Born
$1 to $9,999	29.3%	37.0%
$10,000 to $19,000	19.8%	29.2%
$20,000 to $34,000	21.7%	18.8%
$35,000 to $49,000	13.4%	7.9%
$50,000 or more	15.8%	7.1%

But bureaucrats have no monopoly on confusion. Joel Kotkin of Pepperdine University repeatedly asserts that "Immigrants are making a big contribution economically. . . . During the 1980s . . . the number of families with incomes over $35,000 in Los Angeles grew more than four-fold among Asians and grew five times among Latinos, far outdistancing whites" ("Nativists on the Left," *Wall Street Journal*, July 25, 1995). As Mr. Kotkin fails to provide the base number of families, one could easily be misled into thinking that California immigrants are prospering.

The table above shows the income distribution as of 1995 of California immigrants and native residents over 16 years old.

Almost half of natives earn less than $20,000 annually—compared to two-thirds of immigrants. Twenty-nine per cent of natives earn more than $35,000; only 15 per cent of immigrants do so.

Since less than 2 per cent of income-tax revenue in California is generated by those earning below $20,000 per year, immigrants overall are not "making a big contribution economically." And poor immigrants with children are a net public cost because the largest public expense of poor people is the education of their children.

The Los Angeles Unified School District had the largest enrollment growth in the U.S. in the last decade—not only immigrant children but also the citizen children of immigrant parents. And since 1990, births to immigrant mothers have accounted for 44 per cent of all births in California. If a family with four children earns less than $20,000 per year—and many such families have four or more children—the tax revenue they contribute does not cover the cost of educating those children (about $22,000 annually if they speak English). This trend in California has caused a huge education funding deficit.

Yet immigrants also account for 65 per cent of California's 4 million high-school dropouts. According to data from the Anne E. Casey Foundation, California has the largest number of children in the nation—one of every four—living with parents who dropped out of high school. And student success is often tied to the level of parental education. The danger of course is that an underclass, uneducated and unskilled, is now going into its second and third generations.

Common sense says that millions of uneducated immigrants do not benefit America and that their hard work will not necessarily bring financial success to them. Immigration optimism feels good, but it is a feeling, not a fact.

—LINDA THOM

Miss Thom is a retired budget analyst for the Santa Barbara County Administrator.

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Country Time

An excess of immigration undermines the national culture.

GLYNN CUSTRED

THE historian Benedict Anderson observes that a nation is "an imagined political community." By this he means that any nation, even the smallest and most homogeneous, is so large and complex that its members must collectively imagine what holds them together, as against the many conflicting interests pulling them apart. Such a collective image includes shared meanings, myths, and values conveyed in a common language, realized in national symbols, and supported by formal institutions, especially public education. The greater the cultural consensus, the more effective the political process and the more stable the social order. Thus the nation is as much a cultural as it is a political community.

Immigration, especially at high levels, has a natural tendency to disrupt this relationship. Yet the United States has successfully absorbed millions of immigrants throughout its history despite bouts of nativism. Peter Salins, the author of *Assimilation American Style,* describes this process as a contract between the newcomer and the nation whereby immigrants are expected to accept the national language and culture in return for full membership in the political and the cultural community.

Beginning in the 1960s, however, a new and aggressive way of imagining the nation emerged from the universities and began to spread to other institutions. "Multiculturalism" emphasizes not what holds a nation together, but rather what drives it apart. Multiculturalists attack the very concept of linguistic and cultural unity as simply a way of oppressing ethnic and racial minorities.

To a multiculturalist the world is a place of perpetual grievance in which justice is achieved only by strengthening the state so that it can better distribute benefits along racial and ethnic lines. The success of multiculturalism can be

Mr. Custred, a professor of anthropology at California State University at Haywood, was one of the originators of Proposition 209.

Illegal Means a Lot

PARTICIPANTS in the immigration debate often promote measures to control illegal immigration as necessary to preserve public support for legal entries. The image usually employed is "closing the back door of illegal immigration to keep open the front door of legal immigration."

Though such support for the rule of law is heartening, they betray a fundamental misunderstanding of how immigration works. The ineluctable fact is that legal and illegal immigration are two parts of the same process.

Despite various undulations, legal and illegal immigration have increased simultaneously over three decades. Legal immigration grew from 3.3 million in the 1960s to 4.5 million in the 1970s to 7.3 million in the 1980s. At the same time, apprehensions of illegal aliens by the Border Patrol (an imperfect measure, but the only one available) increased from 1.6 million in the 1960s to 8.3 million in the 1970s to 11.9 million in the 1980s.

Mr. Krikorian is executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies.

While overlapping graphs don't prove anything in themselves, it is no coincidence that legal and illegal immigration have risen in tandem. Communities of legal immigrants serve as incubators for illegal immigration, providing housing and jobs for their compatriots who haven't yet managed to procure a green card. In fact, legal and illegal aliens often live under the same roof, members of the same family.

Let's look at the countries immigrants come from. Mexico is the number-one source of legal immigrants—and of illegal immigrants. Of the top 20 source countries of illegal aliens, 13 are in the top 20 source countries of *legal* immigrants. What's more, illegal aliens make up a significant proportion of many major immigrant groups: 40 per cent of Mexican immigrants, almost half of Salvadorans, 18 per cent of Canadians, 14 per cent of Dominicans, 10 per cent of Jamaicans, and 8 per cent of Filipinos.

One of the perverse elements of our legal-immigration system is amazingly long waiting lists for green cards. The State Department reports that there are 3.6 million people qualified for immigration to the U.S. but who have not yet received one of the limited number of visas. The wait can be decades long—Filipino siblings of American citizens now entering have waited almost twenty years, and the same people applying today might wait more than forty years. Obviously waits of this kind suggest a seriously flawed mechanism for selecting immigrants—and they encourage those who have been selected but asked to wait, simply to settle with their relatives illegally.

The late Barbara Jordan's Commission on Immigration Reform said these "extraordinary backlogs . . . undermine the credibility of our policy." By reducing respect for our law, the absurd waiting lists encourage people to flout other rules. Also, political gimmicks like the Visa Lottery contribute to the climate of contempt for the law.

Last year, about one-quarter of "legal" immigrants were, in fact, illegal aliens using the legal immigration system to launder their status—a figure more than triple Immigration and Naturalization Service expectations. And with regard to Mexico specifically, an internal State Department survey has found that upward of 90 per cent of legal immigrants from that largest source of newcomers are illegal aliens.

Clearly cutting legal immigration is a prerequisite to controlling the latter.

—MARK KRIKORIAN

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measured by the extent to which it has penetrated the schools, universities, government, and large corporations. A

The high immigration levels of 1880–1920 produced similar problems.

demoralized Nathan Glazer recently declared, "We're all multiculturalists now." In fact, most Americans still firmly hold to the values that define the American national culture. One of the most powerful weapons of multiculturalism, racial preferences, has come under attack in the courts and, more spectacularly, from Proposition 209.

Meanwhile, the terms of immigration have changed. Newcomers increasingly assimilate not into a common cultural and political community, but rather into a society where the state is separated from the nation, and where the nation is fragmenting into contending ethnic and racial interest groups. In addition, elites in business, government, and education either acquiesce in or actively promote this balkanization.

Those, like Peter Salins, whose slogan is "Immigration Yes, Multiculturalism No!" must confront the painful question of whether continuing high levels of immigration create the conditions in which this multiculturalism thrives. Common sense suggests so. High immigration fosters ethnic enclaves in which immigrants retain their original language and culture; this provides ethnic pressure groups with apparently reasonable grounds for bilingual arrangements in schools, voting, the workplace, etc.; and ordinary Americans, seeing these as temporary concessions to immigrants adjusting to American life, realize only late in the day that they are the permanent rules of a balkanized society. A series in the *San Francisco Examiner* revealed that 86 languages are now used in California's schools, that 25 per cent of pupils are "limited English proficient," and that testing in other languages will soon be introduced.

The high immigration levels of 1880–1920 produced similar problems and the similar ideology of "cultural pluralism"—until restrictionist legislation produced more assimilable immigrant numbers and greater cultural cohesion. So we must now pay closer attention to immigration, not only clamping down on illegal aliens, but also taking a more rational policy toward legal immigration.

Some conservatives whose world view extends only to the free market complain that immigration restriction is economically unsound. This ignores the fact that economic well-being develops in a wider social and cultural context. Immigration today is the importation not just of labor, but also of clients for the "diversity" industry, whose expansion will mean less social stability and more ethnic and class tension—none of which bodes well for the market.

Then there are libertarians who object to laws controlling free passage across borders. Yet sovereignty includes the right of a nation to control its borders for the benefit of those who live within them. To undermine that sovereignty and to ignore the necessary congruence between the national culture and the state is to create for ourselves a quite unnecessary degree of instability. □

Migrating Species

Environmentalists worry that eco-systems may be affected by immigration.

JOHN A. BADEN & DOUGLAS S. NOONAN

ENVIRONMENTALISTS have long held that environmental problems come down to one issue: population. All our environmental woes, from species extinction to global warming, can ultimately be traced back to human population pressures.

In 1968, Paul Ehrlich wrote the best-selling *Population Bomb*. Despite his inaccurate predictions of doom, traditional greens still zealously cling to his thesis. According to Claude Martin, director of World Wildlife Fund International, "Conventional wisdom has it that the world's rapid increase in population is largely responsible for its environmental degradation." Even self-proclaimed optimist Gregg Easterbrook says, "Human population growth is at once the most important and worst understood of ecological issues."

The problem is not solely with human species. Consider Yellowstone National Park. Nearly all independent observers decry the severe deterioration of that ecosystem caused by overpopulations of elk and bison. Generations ago, predators like wolves and Indian hunters balanced wildlife populations. Ecologist Frederic Wagner writes, "Today we have removed those constraints, but the breeding urges remain."

In human and animal ecology, population and environmental quality are intimately linked. Moreover, population's impact on the environment is often very site-specific. The United States is not suffering from too many bison; Yellowstone Park is.

And, when it comes to local human populations, few would deny the prominent role of immigration. The U.S. Census Bureau predicts that immigrants, legal or otherwise, will be responsible for two-thirds of the net U.S. population growth by 2050. Thanks largely to immigration, California's population is projected to jump another 67 per cent in just 13 years. And, when the population changes, so will the attendant environmental concerns. Last year, a report of the President's Council on Sustainable Development bluntly stated, "This is a sensitive issue, but reducing immigration levels is a necessary part of population stabilization and the drive toward sustainability."

Garret Hardin, professor emeritus of ecology at the University of California at Santa Barbara, writes, "Once an environmentalist faces the issue of population growth, he finds he cannot avoid the immigration problem." It would make sense, therefore, if environmental

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groups were to incorporate immigration issues into their policy platforms, just as they do with population. What is Greenpeace's policy on immigration? Or the Sierra Club's? They have none. Even Zero Population Growth demurs.

Why is immigration policy so intractable for green groups?

For one reason, green groups are typically associated with modern liberal politics. Their preferred strategy for resolving environmental problems has been to rely heavily on government coercion. Surely Al Gore and Carol Browner (at the Environmental Protection Agency), can usher us toward a new, greener society—if only we give them sufficient power.

There is a further consideration. The greens' usual politics of protecting flies over people and swamps over jobs comes dangerously close to elitism. Greens strive nervously to differentiate themselves from elitists. Their cause, they tell themselves, is the plight of the common man: the tired, the poor, the wretched refuse. Emma Lazarus's words are a clarion call to Nanny State advocates within enviro groups.

Thus, in 1994, when California's Proposition 187 sought to cut off public services from illegal immigrants, it drew fierce opposition from the California League of Conservation Voters. Executive Director Sam Schuchat explained that, although Prop. 187 wasn't primarily an environmental issue, "We felt like we had to do it just to make sure we were on the right side of history on this one. . . . Environmentalists wanted to show that we are on the side of people, not just endangered species." Bleeding hearts trumped sustainability.

The same is true for the Sierra Club —perhaps the nation's most influential environmental group—which takes policy stances on everything from playgrounds to population. In the 1970s, the group committed itself to zero population growth in the United States. Yet after years of internal debate, in February 1996 the Club resolved to "take no position on immigration." With its members divided during an election year, Sierra Club leadership meekly said, "No comment."

Immigration has not gone gently into that good night, however. In the words of retired engineering professor Alan Kuper, a long-time Sierra Club member from Ohio, "We can't win if the population keeps growing." He argues that the well-being of immigrants and everyone

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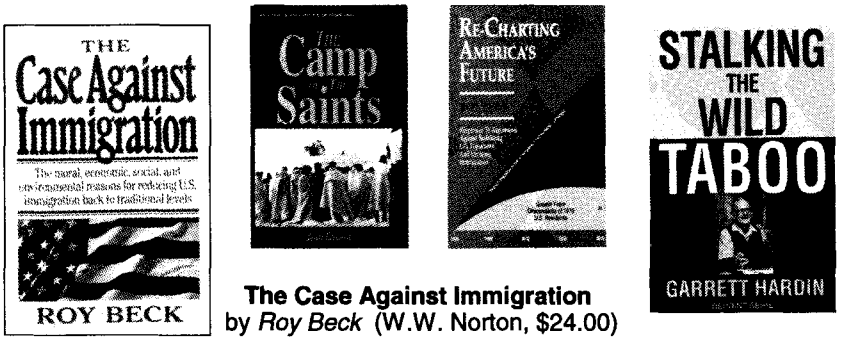

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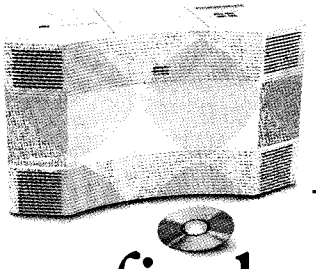

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else is ultimately jeopardized by population growth due to immigration. Dr. Kuper has initiated a referendum to reverse the Club's 1996 policy. If it succeeds—and it may—the Sierra Club will have to acknowledge the realities of balancing immigration and population with other values, such as individual well-being.

'We can't win if the population keeps growing.'

Interestingly, a similar dilemma faces environmental groups on overgrazing in Yellowstone. While elk and bison resort to starvation rations like tree bark and pine needles, the National Wildlife Federation shrinks from culling the herds. Overpopulation is a big problem, it concurs, but limiting the number of newcomers—be they elk or immigrants—is not an option.

Or is it? There may come a time when they recognize the inevitability of tradeoffs to conserve scarce resources. After all, their position is that you can't have unlimited growth without destroying the planet. It will be interesting to see how they grapple with the question of how to save the planet and everyone who wants to be on it at the same time. □

Overriding Elites

Political leaders who defend current levels of immigration substitute their own will for that of their constituents.

ROY BECK

WHEN Congress considered reform of an immensely popular immigration policy in 1965, a Harris poll found the public opposed by a 2 to 1 margin. Americans objected to any change in the composition of the immigrant stream, and even more to any increase in the numbers. Congress changed the law anyway, promising that numbers would not rise.

Immigration began to rise immediately. But Congress neither corrected its mistake nor backed up its promise. For three decades, Congress has consistently protected higher and higher numbers while national polls have found larger and larger majorities of Americans wanting those numbers cut back.

Last year, the *Wall Street Journal* found Americans preferring cuts in immigration by a 3 to 1 margin. Congress still turned back a major effort at immigration reform and protected a numerical level that is now *quintuple* the annual immigration of the pre-1965 era.

Indeed, polling suggests there is no demographic segment in which the majority favors current policy. But this broad public opposition has not translated into citizen action. Perhaps it is not intense enough to move people to apply direct pressure on Congress. Or perhaps social taboos hold Americans back from expressing anti-immigration opinions. For whatever reason, few members of Congress have received a heavy enough volume of mail or persistent enough objections at town-hall meetings to convince them that they have much to lose politically by supporting high immigration levels.

National lobbying groups, on the other hand, have been anything but reluctant to voice their support for high immigration. And their power to cause political trouble might even confuse congressmen about what grassroots opinion is.

It is difficult to think of any other issue on which the national organizations have so uniformly spoken for a position that is opposite the opinions of their own members. Consider perhaps the two loudest voices against immigration reform last year: business organizations and Hispanic groups. A Roper poll showed that when offered several types of cuts, 70 per cent of Americans said total immigration should be brought down at least to below 300,000 a year. The opinions of Hispanics differed sharply from the "Hispanic" positions advocated in Washington. Roper found Hispanics favored deep cuts in current immigration levels, by a 7 to 1 margin over those who favored smaller cuts, today's levels, or even higher immigration.

Roper did not have a category that precisely corresponded to the constituencies of the business groups. But a category of "executives and professionals" favored deep cuts by a 12 to 1 ratio. And Americans in the highest income category (above $75,000 a year) favored deep cuts by a 15 to 1 ratio. Yet, most observers say that the power of the National Association of Manufacturers, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and other business groups was key to scuttling last year's provisions to end family chain migration—a reform advocated by the Jordan Commission and by the leadership of House and Senate panels on immigration.

Even more confounding was the lobbying of the national office of the AFL–CIO against reform of chain migration. Though national labor leaders have historically led opposition to the importation of foreign labor, they recognized on this occasion that as a business, the AFL–CIO was seeing its membership (and dues) grow only because of foreign-born workers. So the union leadership ignored the views of most blue-collar workers, who Roper found supported deep cuts by a 20 to 1 ratio.

In the House, the chain-migration reform would have succeeded with the change of only 28 votes. The reform lost primarily because of net opposition from one Midwestern and three Northeastern delegations: New York (net of 25 votes against reform), Michigan (14), Pennsylvania (10), and Massachusetts (9). Yet Roper found the residents of the Midwest and Northeast were the *most* supportive of reform. The ratios of support for deep cuts were: Northeast, 24 to 1; Midwest, 21 to 1; South, 12 to 1; and West, 10 to 1.

Washington's religious lobbies have been relentless in opposing nearly any measure that would reduce legal or illegal immigration. Their influence is especially important because it lends a moral cast to a position that otherwise might be seen as a selfish attempt by industry

Mr. Beck has written two books about immigration and is Washington Editor of The Social Contract, *a quarterly journal.*

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to profit from cheap labor, for immigration lawyers to benefit from more business, for land speculators to profit from massive population growth, and for ethnic organizations to gain political influence. But the religious lobbies have very little support from the pews. No lobby has been more passionate about keeping immigration high than the Jewish and Catholic Washington offices, yet Roper found that Jews by an 8 to 1 margin and Catholics by an 11 to 1 margin supported deep cuts.

Similarly, Ralph Reed may have turned a number of Republican votes in the House last year with his last-minute letter from the Christian Coalition advising against chain-migration reform. And liberal mainline Protestant lobbies also actively resisted cuts. Yet Roper found 21 to 1 support for deep cuts among all Protestants. In fact, the more devout an American, the more likely his support for cuts. The ratio for deep cuts among people who described themselves as "not very" religious was 13 to 1; among those who said they were "very" religious, it was 17 to 1.

As for the Congressional Black Caucus, it overwhelmingly rejected immigration reform. But that was not the way black Americans saw the issue. Roper found non-Hispanic blacks wanted deep cuts by an 11 to 1 margin.

Besides measuring support for deep cuts among Hispanics (7 to 1) and non-Hispanic whites (16 to 1), Roper found support at a 6 to 1 ratio among "others," a category primarily consisting of Asian-Americans. Groups purportedly representing Asian-Americans are widely credited with winning President Clinton back from his endorsement of Barbara Jordan's reforms. And this reversal was crucial. Until the President abruptly announced his opposition to reform after some now-questionable fundraising among Asian-Americans, Texas Democrat John Bryant (ranking member of the House panel on immigration) had anticipated support from more than enough Democrats to end chain-migration.

In short, every segment of Americans is being misrepresented by its national lobbying voice in Washington. Fill in the blanks differently and Harvey Roberts of the *Miami Times* might have been speaking for any segment of Americans last year when he wrote: "Apparently, in recent decades, our Black leaders and other prominent Black public speakers have been most timid in

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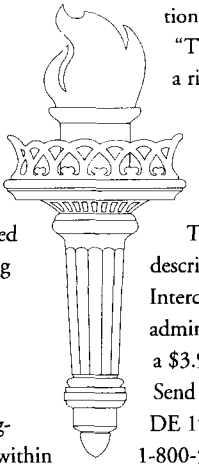

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speaking up for our own interests on this issue . . . We American Blacks must once again be vigilant and again diligently mount an intense protest movement against high immigration so that the next Congress of 1997–1998 will openly discuss and fully incorporate all of our concerns when it decides whether to reduce the excess number of immigrants coming to this country." □

Un-American Activities

If immigration destroys America, does that make the people who favor it un-American?

PETER BRIMELOW

New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani has turned on his fellow Republicans in Congress, calling their welfare law "un-American" because it denies assistance to legal immigrants. —*UPI, May 8*

AH, the immigration debate—that's what I love about it. There's none of this nonsense about "My distinguished colleague" and "Will the gentleman from Armpit please yield?" We don't take prisoners here.

All in good fun, of course. Civilians startled by the abuse that is quite routinely exchanged by us immigration debaters need to bear in mind Samuel Johnson's definition, in his *Dictionary*, of "[expletive deleted]": "a term of endearment between sailors."

Personally, I don't even find Rudolph Giuliani's tergiversations (see above) especially distressing. Needless to say, legislation to ensure that immigration is not being perversely subsidized by the American taxpayer cannot possibly be regarded as "un-American." Indeed, the attempt to keep immigrants from being "public charges" is one of the most consistent themes of American immigration policy. The Bay Colony legislated about it in 1639, only 19 years after the Pilgrims landed. At the height of the last great wave of immigration in the early 1900s, more than half of the 2 per cent of arrivals sent back after inspection on Ellis Island were suspected potential charity cases. American authorities have always struggled to keep out the indigent, criminal, and diseased—until now.

But hey, New York was an alien place to most Americans even before the influx accidentally triggered by the 1965 Immigration Act, which has driven the foreign-born proportion of its population to the current incredible 40 per cent. Anyone attempting to get elected as a Republican there must be viewed with the clinical detachment you would bring to studying an unusually ambitious performing flea.

At least, I should say, I *assume* the abuse is all in good fun. I'm indulging in the usual polite fiction when I say that immigration debaters "exchange" abuse. We don't. As any fair-minded observer must agree, all the abuse comes from the immigration enthusiasts, and it is directed at those of us who think the current system is less than perfect.

This is not, God knows, because we don't feel like hurling abuse back. But the major media are so pro-immigration that only the most squeaky-clean facts and logic on our side have any chance of making it through.

Still, there's a certain lack of symmetry when one side in a debate can routinely make charges that would seem designed to drive their opponents out of public discourse and even destroy their chances of making a living if they work in journalism or academe. Is there a moral equivalent to their charges of xenophobia, nativism, racism, neo-Nazism, etc.? (Just to select a few from my own experience.)

Yes. The morally equivalent charge is this: What the immigration enthusiasts are doing is, in the last analysis, treason.

Treason? Well, I don't literally mean they should be arrested and tried. I mean it in the same warm, cuddly, fun sense in which they describe us as xenophobes, nativists, racists, neo-Nazis . . . and "un-American."

Treason is defined quite specifically in the U.S. Constitution (Article III, Section 3): *Treason against the United States shall consist only in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort.* The Founders were specific because they were aware of the danger of what Oliver North was later memorably to describe as "criminalizing policy differences."

But the Founders did not mean that only armed attack constituted treason. The Supreme Court, in *Cramer*, quoted a definition of treason as "an act which weakens or tends to weaken the power of the [United States] . . ." Treason required an act and conscious intent; but not necessarily war.

And this definition of treason must be read in the context of what the Founders believed they were doing. The preamble to the Constitution begins: "We, the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves *and our posterity* . . ." [Italics mine.]

By 2050, the U.S. will be 'a place that George Washington would not recognize.'

Not posterity in general, note—but the specific posterity of those men who signed that document. They represented a full-fledged nation. Newcomers might be assimilated. But there was no thought that they should transform.

Today, however, immigration triggered by the 1965 Act is changing the U.S. in a way unprecedented in history. The Census Bureau projects that by 2050, the population will be nearly 400 million, of whom 130 million will be post-1970 immigrants and their descendants—virtually all from non-traditional sources of U.S. immigration. So by 2050, the U.S. will be "a place that George Washington would not recognize," as historian John Hope Franklin recently gloated to Duke University freshmen.

There is an obvious and undeniable risk that a country which in 2050 will be, for example, one-quarter Latino, must also be, in some degree, Latin American in its politics and culture.

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Will it then be tranquil domestically? Will the blessings of liberty be secured?

And do supporters of current immigration policy know and intend that it will "weaken" the United States?

Paradoxically, the political correctness that has protected immigration enthusiasts for thirty years hurts them here. It has lulled them into saying some interesting things:

—"We are transforming ourselves."—Doris Meissner, INS Commissioner.

—"The last gasp of white America in California."—State Democratic Party Chairman Art Torres, describing California's Proposition 187.

Or (this just in) how about Clinton-appointed U.S. Civil Rights Commissioner Yvonne Lee, in the May 16 *AsianWeek* newspaper:

—"People are forecasting that [Asians] are the fastest-growing minority group due largely to immigration. But [given the restrictions against welfare use by future immigrants] how many people are going to take the risk of sponsoring someone and what long-term impact will that have on our social status and political empowerment?"

Here Miss Lee openly says that her agenda is to build an ethnic faction—with taxpayer money to finance it.

Why not? Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo told Mexican-Americans in 1995 that they were "Mexicans—Mexicans who live north of the border." He proposed to allow them to retain Mexican citizenship while exerting influence here. Washington said nothing.

All these immigration enthusiasts apparently wish, quite consciously, to end the U.S. as it existed in 1965.

Does this make them guilty of treason? I don't think so. No doubt they truly do not realize the implications of their position. Once the facts are pointed out, they will hasten to recant.

Won't they? □

One Step Forward, Two Back

LAST year Congress dealt with illegal immigration and welfare reform, and so it seems reasonable to expect that it would now move on to a debate of the larger problem—legal immigration, which accounts for about three-quarters of total immigration to the United States. But the mood in Washington has shifted. The Administration is free to ignore the problems of legal immigration since Texas Democrat Barbara Jordan is no longer around to raise the issue. Many Republicans are convinced that last year's immigration debate hurt them in the 1996 elections, despite all the evidence to the contrary (see *NR*, Dec. 23, 1996, p. 41).

Not only is Congress *not* moving forward, it is not even content to maintain the status quo. Instead, it is scrambling to reverse the laws enacted last year, notably the welfare-reform law.

The debate over welfare restrictions is especially interesting since both the immigrant-advocacy Left and the libertarian Right have assured Americans for years that immigrants don't use welfare. So what's the problem with making them ineligible? Not surprisingly, these folks (Abraham, Brownback, DeWine, et al.) have either changed their tune or gone into hiding for the current debate.

To be sure, a few voices in Congress point out that all prospective immigrants (except refugees, who are exempt from the welfare restrictions) pledge not to become public charges in the United States and that most have sponsors who promised to provide for them in hard times. Nonetheless, the House and Senate have both passed FY 1997 supplemental funding bills that extend all legal immigrants' eligibility for Supplemental Security Income through September 30, 1997. And the new budget-balancing deal includes billions of dollars to restore permanently SSI eligibility for disabled immigrants, while at the same time cutting Medicare by $115 billion over the next five years.

But reversing immigrant welfare reform apparently is not enough. Bills have also been introduced to undo portions of last year's illegal-immigration act. The most egregious came to light during President Clinton's recent trip to Costa Rica, where he assured the people of Central America that they are in a "rather special category" when it comes to immigration to the United States. He did not apparently mean "illegal," because he went on to announce that his Administration hopes to amend a provision in the new law that makes it more difficult for illegal immigrants to avoid deportation if they have avoided being caught long enough to establish families here. The new law also limits to 4,000 the number of illegal immigrants whom the Administration may exempt from deportation annually on these grounds. But the cap of 4,000 is nowhere near high enough to accommodate the 300,000 illegal Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Nicaraguans the Administration does not want to deport.

"And just as we were quite generous . . . in welcoming Vietnamese people to our shores after the termination of our involvement in Vietnam," Clinton told the Central Americans, "it seems to me we ought to be sensitive to the disruptions that were caused [in Central America] during those tough years . . ."

Never mind that we lost in Vietnam, which fell to Communism, while we won in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala, which are now democracies. Never mind that the Vietnamese came to our shores legally, while most Central Americans fleeing civil wars entered illegally. And never mind that while we have admitted 650,000 Vietnamese immigrants, we admitted legally 950,000 Central Americans during the same period. But we have still apparently not done enough, and so Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D., Ill.) has introduced a bill to eliminate the cap.

According to President Calderón Sol of El Salvador, however, Mr. Clinton doubted he could persuade Congress to accept an all-out amnesty for Central Americans illegally here. It's not clear why the President was so modest. After all, he played a leading role in scuttling legal immigration reductions last year. He held up final passage of last year's immigration bill until the Republican majority in Congress agreed to remove certain provisions. And it now seems certain that he will manage to restore immigrants' eligibility for SSI.

So don't be too surprised if you start hearing more rhetoric about the potential benefits of an amnesty.

—ROSEMARY JENKS

Miss Jenks is an immigration consultant in Washington, D.C.

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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

Greetings, students, parents, friends, faculty, and trustees! What an honor to be with you all here today, and especially to be awarded this honorary doctorate. I'm honored by your honor.

[Hold for applause.]

And no, I promise not to do the Macarena!

[Hold for laughter.]

But seriously, my friends, you are standing on the threshold of a great journey. A journey into the future. I know what you're thinking.

[Make meaningful eye contact with graduates.]

You're thinking, "Hey, what's the future going to be like for me, out in the real world?"

You're right to think that. Everywhere we look, we see daunting and seemingly insurmountable challenges. America's future has never looked so bright, nor, may I say, so filled with hurdles. As I gaze out at you today, I see proud parents and friends, distinguished faculty, and behind me, Dean [insert dean's name] and [insert names of other honorary doctorates], and I think that perhaps we owe your generation an apology.

For we have perpetuated, maybe even created, the myth that your generation, the so-called "Generation X," is a generation of slackers and malcontents. A generation of kids who want to do nothing but listen to music and smoke tobacco products. A generation of young people unconcerned with the rainforest and chloro-fluorocarbons and health care and other important issues.

Well, are we right?

[Wait for audience to shout back, "No!"]

Of course we're not. There is no controlling legal authority to suggest that you're all slackers!

[Hold for laughter. Smile sheepishly.]

And I'm speaking as a young person myself. Not as young as some of you, but I'm vigorous, and as someone who was once as young as you, chronologically speaking, when my generation faced Vietnam, I was vigorous enough to see both sides, to protest and enlist.

Are you ready to face the future?

[Wait for audience to roar back, "Yes!" If they don't, then lower voice throughout the following:]

Of course you are. Of course you are.

And so I say to you, on this day of commencement, which marks a beginning and an end, that in life you will be judged by the small things, by the private things, by things that, unless you run for office, no one will ever hear about. Whatever you do today, and whatever you've done up to today, will find its way into the newspaper or nightly news.

[Charge on through moans of dismay.]

In the past four years you've not so much been going to school as constructing a record, a record of achievement, to be sure, but also a record of anecdotes. Will they be flattering, like Roger Rosenblatt's memories of me at Harvard? Will they be compelling, like Marty Peretz's of me at Harvard?

[Shrug nonchalantly.]

I know you think that you're looking squarely at the future. But take it from me, the truth is that the future is actually looking squarely at you. It's saying, "Be very careful what you do. This is all going to come out some day." That's why explanations are so very, very important.

[Change tempo to upbeat.]

Let me tell you a story about challenges.

My son, Al Jr., was ill. He had a fever, an upset stomach, and a runny nose. And at a time for me that was—how can I put this?—inconvenient.

Life, as you will find, is often inconvenient.

It was early in the 1996 campaign. We were in the fight of our lives. We were trying to protect America's values, strengthen Medicare, health care, and the environment . . .

And we succeeded! Those things are fine now!

[Hold up hands, as if to say, "Please, please, no more applause."]

But my story isn't about the big things we've done. It's about the little things.

My son was sick. I had fundraising calls to make. Do I head over to the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee to make them? Is that the quote-unquote "right" [make quote gesture] thing to do? Is staying in my office, where my son can always reach me, and making the calls from there, is that the quote-unquote "wrong" [make quote gesture] thing to do?

Have I paid the price for doing the "wrong" thing? Sure I have. Would I do it again? No, but that's not the point.

The point is you make judgment calls. Life isn't perfect. But a sick child, a child you hold in your arms, a child you pray to God won't ever have another runny nose again, well, those are the things [Stop for a moment. Clear throat. Let voice get all soft.] . . . those are the things that matter.

Go forth unto the future. Go forth with an explanation.

[Hold for standing ovation.]

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NR SWEATSHIRT Join Associate Editor Karina Rollins in the upper ranks of conservative fashion with our new, handsome, top-quality, fleece-lined gray Lee® pullover (also made of 11-ounce "ultraweight" cotton, and boasting *NR*'s logo). How better to keep snug before Spring has sprung. L/XL. $29.00 (**PS**).

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NR RAIN SLICKER Associate Publisher Jack Fowler, all wet? Not when he's safe and dry in the *NR* "Right as Rain" poncho. These handsome, water-resistant hooded slickers (with *NR*'s logo on a blue background) are big (50" by 80") and feature non-corroding snaps. Talk about practical! Comes in a compact carrying case (so it's convenient for taking on vacation, to the ballgame, etc.). $10.00 (**RG**).

NR HATS Speaking of the ballgame, the gents are wearing their favorite chapeau: the new *NR* baseball cap. It's so classy (with deep blue peak and highlights, a cream background, and *NR*'s embroidered logo) it's nearly formal wear! One-size-fits-all (courtesy of the adjustable strap). $15.00 (**BC**). If tennis is your sport, you'll flip your lid over the new *NR* Visor, seen here shading the visage of Miss Rollins. It's handsome, practical (thanks to the big peak) and ideological (thanks to the *NR* logo). One size fits all. $12.00 (**TC**).

NR MUG Mr. Longstreet is holding the *NR* mug—the right way to drink a BIG cup (13 ounces) of your favorite libation. Features the *NR* logo on a cobalt blue background. $7.95. (**MG**). Have a second cup: get two *NR* mugs for only $14. (**MG2**)

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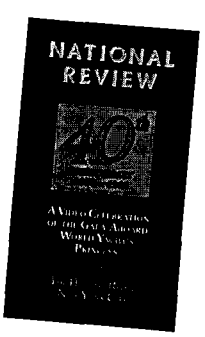

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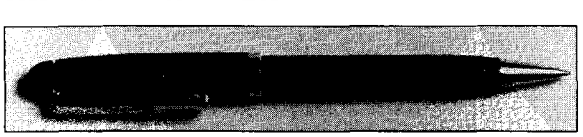

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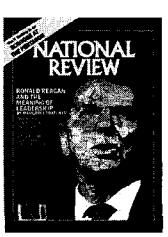

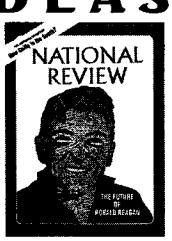

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BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

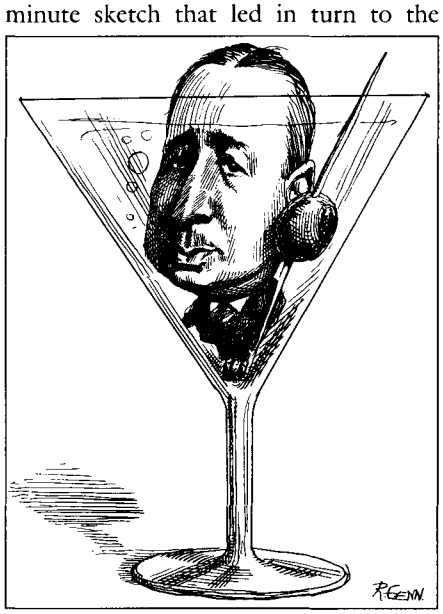
What Was Robert Benchley?

CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

HOW refreshing to read a biography of a humorist who was not, in real life, a son of a bitch. The worst that could be said of Robert Benchley (1889–1945) was that he was a bit of a bounder to his wife, an absentee father to his sons, and ultimately a disappointment to himself. But for all that, his wife and sons were devoted to him, as he in his way was to them. His friends, who were legion, adored him. As he lay in the hospital, hemorrhaging to death from cirrhosis, forty people showed up to volunteer to give blood. How many writers could make that posthumous boast? At one of the many wakes held in his honor, the novelist John O'Hara said, "This time, the party is really over." Someone rejoined that the deceased members of the Algonquin Round Table must be partying all night in Heaven. James Thurber, whose most famous creation, Walter Mitty, had been based on Benchley's bumbling short-film persona, Joe Doakes, said yes, and they were no doubt "having the time of their infinities."

What a party it had been. Benchley may not have tasted his first alcoholic beverage until he was 31, but he began quaffing deeply from the old cup of life early on. At Harvard he was president of the *Lampoon* and became so notoriously funny an after-dinner speaker that the president of the university insisted on speaking before him. An early mentor was Franklin Pierce Adams, the best-known newspaper columnist of his day. Soon Benchley was pinch-hitting at theater reviews for P. G. Wodehouse at *Vanity Fair*, where he eventually became managing editor. Later he became chief theater critic for *The New Yorker* and a humor columnist for *Life*, producing enough material for 12 collections. He was present at the creation of the Algonquin Round Table, or the Vicious Circle, as they called themselves. He became an accidental star on Broadway for his "Treasurer's Report," the eight-minute sketch that led in turn to the career in Hollywood that brought him fame, bitterness, and misery. Any life is the more fascinating for ending badly.

Laughter's Gentle Soul: The Life of Robert Benchley, by Billy Altman (Norton, 382 pp., $30)



Roman Genn

Benchley made 48 movie shorts, including "The Sex Life of the Polyp," and "How to Sleep," which won him an Oscar for best short feature in 1935. Shirley Temple asked him for his autograph. His résumé bears a technical asterisk: the 1928 movie short of his "Treasurer's Report" was the first continuous-sound picture ever made, and in 1936 he took part in the first TV program ever transmitted. He so impressed Alfred Hitchcock that the director signed him to co-write and star in *Foreign Correspondent*. He had affairs with, among many others, Tallulah Bankhead, who gave him rave reviews as a lover. Bob Benchley had a bigger endowment than Harvard's.

When in 1943 he took the unusual but rather noble step of announcing his retirement as a writer—"I don't think I write funny any more. I've run out of ideas"—newspapers ran mournful editorials. S. J. Perelman wrote in the *New York Times*, "Come back, Bob, all is forgiven." It was a reference to the "spurious trade" Benchley had been practicing out on the West Coast, sacrificing his literary posterity to the fatted celluloid calf while killing himself slowly—"Who's in a hurry?" he had the wit to ask—in all-night benders with drinking buddies in his bungalow at the Garden of Allah. One of his more interesting pet loathings was—birds. He was usually still awake when they began to warble their aubade.

Still, only a Southern Baptist could read Billy Altman's welcome life merely as a cautionary tale. It reminds us that before our own coarse, jumped-up age, the laughter could be kinder and gentler, the wit warming rather than scorching. It was, at any rate, when it emanated from the bibulous, derby-hatted bon vivant, probably best remembered today for a seven-word telegram about being surprised to find the streets of Venice full of water.

Is Benchley one for the ages? Mr. Altman doesn't quite answer the question; but, to be fair, he doesn't quite ask it, either. His book, which includes the complete text of (too) many of the famous comic routines, to the detriment of narrative drive, is a Trojan Horse for a Benchley revival.

Let it begin. But where to start? With Benchley the comic monologist? The trouble here is that, as Benchley himself acknowledged, the stuff was meant to be seen. Reading detailed summaries of a movie, even a short one, has limita-

Mr. Buckley's latest book is Wry Martinis *(Random House).*

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tions. As for Benchley's literary legacy, it seems a mixed bag. Some of his most successful pieces at the time, such as "Call for Mr. Kenworthy," seem a bit dusty now. But there is much that is not dusty, and the diamonds sparkle timelessly, as in "A Romance in Encyclopedia Land":

> "Well," he sighed, as he gazed upon the broad area of subsidence, "if I were now an exarch, whose dignity was, at one time, intermediate between the Patriarchal and the Metropolitan and from whose name has come that of the politico-religious party, the Exarchists, I should not be here day-dreaming."

Or in "Opera Synopses":

> Immerglück has grown weary of always sitting on the same rock and with the same fishes swimming by every day, and sends for Schwül to suggest something to do. Schwül asks her how she would like to have pass before her all the wonders of the world fashioned by the hand of man. She says, rotten.

Why did a guy who could write like this ever go to Hollywood? Could it have been the money? (Stupid question.) At the height of his career out there, he was making $2,000 a week. (Maddeningly, Mr. Altman never bothers to translate such sums into modern equivalences; but multiply by about ten.) It's worth noting—as Mr. Altman does not—that after *A Day in the Life of Walter Mitty* was turned into a movie, the producer Samuel Goldwyn tried desperately to hire James Thurber as a studio writer, offering at one point even more per week than Benchley was paid. Thurber coolly and repeatedly turned him down, content with the meager emoluments of a staff job at *The New Yorker*. (Its editor, Harold Ross, finally had to fire Benchley gently for missing too many New York theater seasons.) Thurber left behind a weightier literary legacy, and his reputation flourishes today.

Well, comparisons are invidious. All Benchley and Thurber shared really were bumbling, Everyman heroes and a benign view of the world. Thurber was a master of English prose. Benchley refused even to consider himself a writer. "I do not think of myself as a writer in the technical sense of the word," he wrote. "I know practically nothing of the craft, and am constantly in dread of violating some elementary rule which every teacher of English A ought to know." This abundant self-deprecation was one of his many endearing qualities. The trouble was, he actually meant it.

He was not, unlike many of his Vicious Circle colleagues, a playwright. He fumbled a career as a Broadway writer when he dropped out of a Fred Astaire project that eventually became the huge hit *Funny Face*. The drama critic was left humiliated over not having been able to write a play.

A few years later, hugely successful in Hollywood, he is disclaiming any pretensions to being an actor: "So here I am, now, considered an actor. Or am I? I've never felt stage fright once while making talking films; maybe my lack of self-consciousness shows that I'm not a real actor. Regular artists are very nervous about their work. Maybe I'm just a human being after all. That suits me." Toward the end, after he had started yet another successful career, as a radio personality, he told a friend, "Look at me. A clown, a comic, a cheap gagman. There's a career for you." (Did I say that this wasn't a cautionary tale?)

Small Company's New Golf Ball Flies Too Far; Could Obsolete Many Golf Courses

Pro Hits 400-Yard Tee Shots During Test Round

Want To Shoot An Eagle or Two ?

By Mike Hensen

YALESVILLE, CT – A small golf company in Connecticut has created a powerful, new ball that flies like a U-2, putts with the steady roll of a cue ball and bites the green on approach shots like a dropped cat. But don't look for it on weekend TV. Long-hitting pros could make a joke out of some of golf's finest courses with it. One pro who tested the ball drove it 400 yards, reaching the green on all but the longest par-four's. Scientific tests by an independent lab using a hitting machine prove the ball out-distances ten major brands dramatically.

The ball's extraordinary distance comes partly from a revolutionary new dimple design that keeps the ball aloft longer. But there's also a secret change in the core that makes it rise faster off the clubhead. Another change reduces air drag. The result is a ball that gains altitude quickly, then sails like a glider. None of the changes is noticeable in the ball itself.

Despite this extraordinary performance, the company has a problem. A spokesman put it this way: "In golf you need endorsements and TV publicity. This is what gets you in the pro shops and stores where 95% of all golf products are sold. Unless the pros use your ball on TV, you're virtually locked out of these outlets. TV advertising is too expensive to buy on your own, at least for us.

"Now, you've seen how far this ball can fly. Can you imagine a pro using it on TV and eagle-ing par-four's? He would turn the course into a par-three, and real men don't play par-three's. This new fly-power forces us to sell it without relying on pros or pro-shops. One way is to sell it direct from our plant. That way we can keep the name printed on the ball a secret that only a buyer would know. There's more to golf than tournaments, you know."

The company guarantees a golfer a prompt refund if the new ball doesn't cut five to ten strokes off his or her average score. Simply return the balls–new or used–to the address below. "No one else would dare do that," boasted the company's director.

If you would like an eagle or two, here's your best chance yet. Write your name and address and "Code Name S" (the ball's R&D name) on a piece of paper and send it along with a check (or your credit card number and expiration date) to National Golf Center (Dept. S-381), 60 Church Street, Yalesville, CT 06492. Or phone 800-285-3900 anytime. No P.O. boxes. One dozen "S" balls cost $24.95, two to five dozen are only $22.00 each, six dozen are only $109.00. You save $40.70 ordering six. Shipping and handling is only $4.50 no matter how large your order. Specify white or Hi-Vision yellow.

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The book's most wrenching moment takes place one night in Hollywood at the Garden of Allah. (Benchley's life can be divided into eras in terms of hotels: Algonquin, Royalton, Garden of Allah.) He was entertaining, among others, F. Scott Fitzgerald and his old *Vanity Fair* comrades Dorothy Parker and Robert Sherwood. Since their *VF* days, Sherwood had gone on to become one of the country's leading playwrights and had received the Pulitzer Prize for *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*.

Benchley had, as usual, been knocking them back. Suddenly he caught sight of Sherwood across the room and said to

Why did a guy who could write like this ever go to Hollywood? Could it have been the money? (Stupid question.)

Sheilah Graham, Fitzgerald's girlfriend, "Those eyes. I can't stand those eyes looking at me!" At first she thought it was a joke. Then Benchley began backing away: "He's looking at me . . . and thinking of how he knew me when I was going to be a great writer—and he's thinking, now look at what I am!" In the dark night of laughter's gentle soul it was, to quote another writer in the room, 3 A.M.

If Benchley wasn't a writer, or an actor, what, then, was he? The answer, curiously, is—frustrated historian. He suffered from the humorist's disease: the fear of not being able to accomplish something "serious." (Quotes mine.) In one of the most affecting, and even funniest, scenes in this book we see him holing up with a secretary at the Garden of Allah bungalow in order to research an analytical history of his favorite period—Queen Anne and the dawn of the Age of Enlightenment. It would make a glorious mise-en-scène for a one-man play about him. Any takers?

He was still talking about his Queen Anne book to friends a year before he died. It was his unfinished—unstarted, actually—masterpiece. If he had had the confidence in himself not to write it "serious," who knows, it might have turned out to be his accidental masterpiece. As it was, he left behind a heaping platter of tasty scrambled oeuvre, and people eager to bleed for him. Isn't that legacy enough? Mr. Altman is to be thanked for his diligence, and for his contagious love of the man. As for posterity, the fat lady hasn't necessarily sung yet; Immerglück grows weary of sitting on the same rock with the same fishes swimming by. □

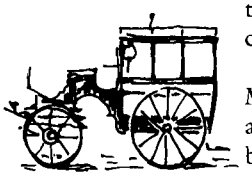
Art, American-Style

JAMES GARDNER

SOME people will find it odd that *American Visions*—which, I predict, will assume its place as the best general history of American art—should have been written by a resident alien, specifically by an Australian and sub-specifically by Robert Hughes. How dare this furriner presume to expatiate on our precious culture? But when one considers that there seems to be

American Visions: The Epic History of Art in America, by Robert Hughes (Knopf, 635 pp., $65)

nothing wrong with a Briton like Sir John Pope-Hennessy writing about *trecento* Siena, or the German-born Nikolaus Pevsner writing about English Gothic architecture, or the American Robert Rosenblum writing about eighteenth-century France, it is only fair to conclude that Mr. Hughes has as much right as anyone else. At all events, whatever doubts one might have on this score will be dispelled within the first few pages of this book, which has been published to coincide with Mr. Hughes's eight-part PBS documentary. The author, who has lived in this country for thirty years and is *Time* magazine's art critic, brings to his subject a fully sufficient understanding of American history combined with a truly impressive knowledge of art and its history. Most important, he has an all-too-rare ability to turn his treatment into a dignified entertainment, without falling into the trap either of condescending generality or of nitpicking pedantry.



Mr. Hughes's achievement in creating a compelling and unified narrative is even more impressive when you consider that the history of American art presents certain problems fundamentally different from those that characterize other visual cultures. Ours is the only non-native civilization in the Western Hemisphere to have created a new and important artistic tradition, notwithstanding the major achievements of Canadians like Agnes Martin and Mexicans like Diego Rivera. And yet, for most of our history we were an artistic backwater, fully content to follow the fashions of Europe at a remove of one or two generations. In order to tell that story well, an historian has not only to be willing to deal with whole centuries in which our art rarely rises above mediocrity, but also to exhibit a knowledge of everything from Spanish Baroque painting and Palladian architecture to Biedermeier furniture and Analytic Cubism. Accordingly, Mr. Hughes is not all that interested in making a case for a unified theme running through our art. He does not try to assert the Americanness of American art, in the way that Pevsner succeeded in demonstrating the Englishness of English art. Rather his approach is more ad hoc, and it could scarcely be otherwise, given the diversity of influences upon American artists.

For a fuller appreciation of Mr. Hughes's achievement as a writer and teacher, it should be pointed out that whereas most writing generally is middling, most art writing is awful. This is not because writing about art presents special challenges, but because those who practice it are rarely equal to any of the challenges it presents. Indeed, there is probably no other province of writing whose practitioners are as consistently inadequate to its specific requirements as art criticism. First of all, most people who write about art in America today are really gallery groupies who are as ignorant of art history as of the English language. If, on the other hand, they are academics, they tend to be either too

Mr. Gardner is NR*'s art critic and the author most recently of* The Age of Extremism *(Birch Lane).*

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theoretical, indulging in polysyllabic mumbo-jumbo, or too pedantic, gleefully demolishing some colleague's calibration of the width of a seventeenth-century still-life.

By contrast, Mr. Hughes exemplifies, according to any reasonable criterion, everything that art writing should be. To begin with, his prose is consistently excellent: there is scarcely a sentence in this massive book that does not bear witness to the care and inventiveness of its author. Consider this passage, taken almost at random, concerning the declining energies of de Kooning: "He tried sculpture too, in 1973–74: a mistake. He worked the clay and plaster into a haptic frenzy of surface that didn't convey any energy as form; the results, cast in bronze, were like giant nose-pickings." As this passage demonstrates, not only is Hughes original and unerringly effective in his marshaling of syntax and vocabulary: he is one of the very rare critics today who can write about the art itself—as opposed to the art world—and be funny. This passage also reveals that Hughes has the courage of his convictions—something almost unheard of in the art world.

For a fuller appreciation of Robert Hughes, it should be pointed out that, whereas most writing generally is middling, most art writing is awful.

Add to this that, of all critics working in America, Mr. Hughes is quite possibly the most knowledgeable about the history of art. Since he wears this knowledge so lightly, only those who have read a fair amount about, say, the Rococo will see quite how much understanding lies behind a statement like this, concerning a Colonial chair: "[Because of the cheapness of wood] a joiner could hog out a cabriole chair leg from an eight- or ten-inch square blank, giving it voluptuously swelling S curves—Hogarth's 'Line of Beauty'—and leaving plenty to spare for relief carving." This passage is also remarkable because of Hughes's abundant sympathy for his subjects—his ability, through a leap of the imagination, to enter into the mind of the artist at the moment of creation. It is this sympathy, this principled generosity, that informs so much of the author's analysis of the myriad artists and patrons under discussion.

In a book that tackles a subject as broad as this, there are bound to be omissions. Still, it is regrettable that George Inness, probably the finest painter in America in the second half of the last century, is mentioned only in passing. As for Mr. Hughes's assessment of the art itself, one cannot help feeling that he seems more discriminating the further back he goes. He acknowledges the primacy of Copley over all other Colonial portraitists, and of Copley's American portraits over his British ones. Likewise he can see past the flimsiness of Thomas Cole's technique to the artist's hidden reservoirs of true feeling, and he has caused me to reassess my judgment of Audubon.

Regarding more recent artists, however, one often has the sense that Mr. Hughes is looking hard for someone to like. I can't help feeling that he fundamentally overrates the rough-hewn brutalism of Leon Golub and the sham geometries of William Bailey. At the same time he makes no mention of Alice Neel, probably the best American por-

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traitist of this century. Nor does he mention Agnes Martin, who, though born in Canada, has spent most of her life in the United States and who, *me judice*, may be the finest living artist. But such quibbles as these are minor given the overriding excellence of what Mr. Hughes has achieved here. □

The Mind of A. N. Wilson

LUKE TIMOTHY JOHNSON

PAUL the Apostle is unquestionably the most powerful, provocative, and puzzling character in the history of Christianity. We know more about him, from the lively account of his adventures in the Acts of the Apostles and from his letters, than we know about Jesus. The case has been made that Christianity owes more of its character to him than to Jesus. Small wonder that Paul tempts biographers of every sort. And because coming to grips with Christianity means in some way coming to grips with Paul, it is even less wonder that biographers come up with the most widely varying portraits. Paul is like Jesus at least in this respect, that his biographies reveal more about their authors than about their subject.

Paul: The Mind of the Apostle, by A. N. Wilson (Norton, 288 pp., $25)

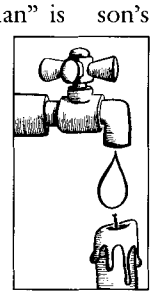
What sort of biographer is A. N. Wilson? For starters, he is an old-fashioned popularizer in the manner of Chesterton and Belloc. No systematic or critical evaluation of sources, no lengthy discussions of alternative interpretations. Biography for him is a matter of telling a story, preferably with the aid of some ancient narrative, like the Acts of the Apostles, that provides both a framework and an opportunity for learned if random glosses. After an opening chapter called "The Emperor Nero's Legacy," which warns the reader against anachronistically reading later understandings of Christianity back into these early days, Wilson basically traces Paul's story from Tarsus to Rome. In contrast to critical New Testament scholars who tend to privilege Paul's letters (as first-hand sources), Wilson sticks to the account in Acts. It's not that he thinks Acts is reliable on every point. Much of his contribution consists in pointing out how this or that aspect of Acts is, in his judgment, impossible, implausible, or falsifying. It appears that he basically follows the story in Acts because that's his style of biography, as shown earlier in his version of *Jesus* (1993). The problem here is the same as in that earlier book. Wilson has no consistent basis for his historical judgments and provides no evidence or argument to support them.

Also old-fashioned is Wilson's pedantic and slightly patronizing manner. He occupies a place just above that of the reader, and from that elevation patiently reports what only he can see. Some of these observations take the form of historical filler, which is always interesting if not consistently germane; when Wilson replays the adventures of Agrippa or shares the gossip from Suetonius and Tacitus he is as entertaining as his sources. But when he shares his reading on the intricacies of tentmaking or the techniques of circumcision, he is as tedious as his topics. Whether diverting or not, this is all antiquarianism, and rarely of any real pertinence.

More irritating is Wilson's preachiness. How many times must he remind the reader that the word "Christian" is not one that Paul himself would have used? How often must he warn against imagining that things back then were as they are in the local Catholic church today? Wilson's own imagination, however, remains unchecked; his favorite exercise is letting speculation out for a run. In *Jesus*, he had proposed that Paul was among the temple guard that had arrested Jesus; that unfounded fantasy reappears here, albeit hedged about with qualifications (perhaps he read some of the reviews of *Jesus*). Even though he ultimately says that it does not matter, he twice airs out theories concerning Paul's sexuality. He proposes that although Luke describes a right fine sea voyage in Acts 27, someone other than Paul may have been aboard. He likes to think of Paul spending his last days, not as a prisoner in Rome and as a martyr under Nero, but as a kind of apostolic beach bum on the Iberian coast: "I prefer to think of him, far away in the west, wholly oblivious to what he had started, eagerly gazing toward the heaving sea on which he had so often been tossed and awaiting the coming of Christ." The words "I prefer to think" tell all one needs to know about Wilson's historiographical rigor.

The subtitle *The Mind of the Apostle* is clearly false advertising if by "mind" we understand Paul's thought, or the teaching found in his letters. Wilson treats the letters almost entirely biographically; what is of interest in them is what they can tell us about Paul's psychology. Failing to make sense of Galatians (there is no evidence that he tried very hard, or got any help from grown-up scholarship), he throws up his hands: "No commentator can explain it because it does not on any rational level make sense." This leaves the text open to the search for some "psychological truth [that] might lie behind Paul's incomprehensible words."

The words 'I prefer to think' tell all one needs to know about Wilson's historiographical rigor.



Here is another way in which Wilson's book is old-fashioned: his focus is on Paul's personality rather than on his literary production or pastoral accomplishment. The book is studded with references to the "restless and almost Nietzschean mind of Paul," to Paul as a "richly imaginative, but confused, religious genius," to his religion as "wild, ecstatic, and confused," to Paul as "the greatest poet of personal religion" and "the first romantic poet in history." What such grand evocations do mostly is relieve Wilson of the necessity of actually trying to follow Paul's thought. Thus for five pages he waxes eloquent on Romans' stupendous importance and cultural influence, but he does not manage even the meagerest epitome of the letter's argument. Perhaps this is just as well, since his one

Mr. Johnson is the Robert W. Woodruff Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins at Emory University.

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effort at reporting the contents of a chapter of Romans is wildly erroneous.

What is truly disheartening about this sort of book is its intellectual sloppiness. Wilson's old-fashioned mannerisms may be forgiven. His failure even to read in the best scholarly research into Paul may not, especially when he poses as an author who has done his homework. If Wilson were as schooled in *paideia* as he would like his readers to believe, then he would recognize the ways in which Paul, far from a tormented psyche whose self is spilled on every page, is a skilled practitioner of the arts of rhetoric. If Wilson had read his Plutarch as carefully as his Plato, he would also know that Paul's concern for morals is remarkably at home among the popular philosophers of his day. If Wilson had read as deeply as he suggests in Jewish studies, he would perhaps have been able to recognize that Paul's use of Scripture and mode of argumentation make considerable sense within the rules set by that ancient discourse. Or, if Wilson had bothered to read Paul's letters more closely, he would have come to see that for this ancient writer it really was not "the mind of Paul" that counted, but "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16). □

Philip Roth's Eternal Things

MAYER SCHILLER

DEAR Zuckerman:

Well, you've done it again. You've held me enthralled page after page.

American Pastoral, which you narrate, has everything one could want in a novel. Its rapid-fire insights into the human condition tumble down upon each other. Yet, they are delivered with just the right degree of irony, ambiguity, and humble humor, which we have

American Pastoral, by Philip Roth (Houghton Mifflin, 423 pp., $26)

come to expect from you. The book is even mercifully free of the off-color detail we have sadly come to associate at times with you and more consistently with your frequent competitor, Roth.

Roth himself, though, has been showing us a gentler, softer side of late with his autobiographical *The Facts* and *The Patrimony*. The latter is a masterpiece that I have frequently reread in recent years, each time gleaning fresh insights into that foundation of our existence, parent–child interaction, where love, fidelity, guilt, failure, and assorted other ties all uncomfortably mingle.

In *The Patrimony*, Roth bathed the mundane in love and showed us how to cherish the imperfect devotion of parents. Thanks to him we can now appreciate the grandeur not only of Herman Roth but of parents, however flawed, everywhere. In *Sabbath's Theater*, though, Roth was up to his old tricks. Frenzy and insight went hand in hand with a hearty dose of vulgarity.

Zuck, can't you talk to him? After all, he is often described as your "alter ego." Just tell him that he really doesn't need all that schmutz to convey his message. Or, if "message" would be too pretentious a word for the old Newark smart aleck, then just tell him the schtick has grown routine and obvious—like that of an old man who hopes to impress the young with dirty jokes. Actually, that is what he's doing all too often, isn't it? Since you've gotten a little out of hand at times yourself, but now seem to be largely free of the need to scandalize, it should be easy for you to explain to Roth that he need not be scatological to entertain.

Here, though, Zuckerman, you've accomplished it. *American Pastoral* is readable and riveting. And aside from the odd extramarital affair, seemingly tossed in as an afterthought, it has been done without the Rothian need to *épater les bourgeois*.

And, if I may say so without giving offense, it is a serious tale as well. "Swede" Levov, Jewish all-American boy from Newark, was a successful athlete and businessman. He married Miss New Jersey, believed in and lived the

Rabbi Schiller teaches Talmud at Yeshiva University High School in Manhattan.

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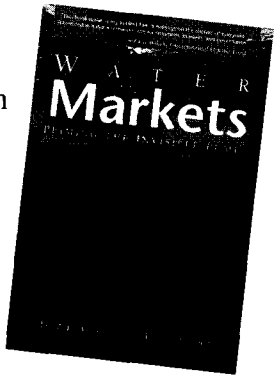

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dream of all good Americans of midcentury. He was truly kind, gracious, moral, and hard-working. A volunteer hitch in the Marines solidified his commitment to the land he loves.

Zuck, you knew Levov as a kid in Newark. Worshiped him really, because the Swede was, as you are, a Jew, and yet he outgoyed the goys at their own games. As you point out to us often in this book, my friend, you've gotten on in years. (That portrayal of your high-school reunion is must reading for anyone who has a past he feels like remembering or a sense of mortality he feels like confronting.) Recently you saw the Swede again. He told you about some troubles he has endured.

The troubles turned out to be beyond anyone's wildest imaginings. The Swede's daughter, Merry, had become a New Left terrorist in the Sixties. She bombed and killed in the name of the "revolution." It was a tale so horrible that you had to get to the bottom of it. It's unclear whether the result of your investigation is fantasy or fact. (Another literary trick borrowed from Roth.) But no matter.

The breakdown of the Swede's relationship with his daughter is presented as a metaphor for the breakdown of an entire generation. Or should that be nation? Civilization? "The old intergenerational give-and-take of the country-that-used-to-be, when everyone knew his role and took the rules dead seriously . . . turned pathological."

There is no reasoning with Merry. She blows up the local post office, kills a man in the process, and flees. For the Swede it was incomprehensible. "That violent hatred of America was a disease unto itself. And he loved America. Loved being an American."

Yes, Zuck, I know you're wondering what Roth is thinking as he reads these lines, lines that exude a love for home and hearth the likes of which even most conservatives are embarrassed by these days. Are the Swede's thoughts as he views his daughter similar to yours as you view your nation now that, as Irving Kristol puts it, "The culture wars are over and the Left has won"?

> Hate America? Why, he lived in America the way he lived inside his own skin. All the pleasures of his younger years were American pleasures, all that success and happiness had been American, and he no longer need keep his mouth shut just to defuse her ignorant hatred. The loneliness he would feel as a man without all his American feelings. The longing he would feel if he had to live in another country. Everything he loved was here.

The Swede even calls into question the cherished Enlightenment dogma of tolerance, when he remembers his failure to remove from his daughter's room a sign which declared, "We are against everything that is good and decent in honky America. We will loot and burn and destroy. We are the incubation of your mother's nightmares."

Roth loves the right things. His parents, his relatives, his hometown. His baseball and his country.

The ability to wield authority was missing from the Swede's virtues. Authority is, of course, born of certainty.

> And because even though he hadn't liked it one bit he did not believe it was his right blah-blah-blah-blah-blah—because out of regard for her property and personal freedom, he couldn't even tear down an awful poster—because he was not capable of even that much righteous violence, now the hideous realization of the nightmare had come along to test further the limits of his enlightened tolerance.

Of course, Zuck, you balance the Swede's musings with those of his daughter. (It is amazing how horrible that New Left talk sounds even after all these years.) You let many others have their say too. The Swede and his wife (and even his old-time father) were quick to embrace Merry's rejection of the Vietnam War. As you point out, the Swede's generation had a hard time articulating its own first principles. And, of course, the absurdity of reality as we often experience it is never far from the surface in your writing. But darn it, man, as much as some may find it hard to believe, you do seem to be coming down on the side of decency and tradition and America as it used to be before the Merrys triumphed. It's subtle. It's lyric. It's heavily nuanced, but the conclusion is unmistakably there.

In the end Merry abandoned the path of leftist terror. In her final meeting with the Swede she had become something very different. Her ultimate fate is part of the story's suspense, and so I won't reveal it. Not that this new Merry was acceptable to the Swede either. There was no final reconciliation. Not between the Swede and Merry or between pre- and post-Sixties America.

What is Roth thinking? You know, Zuck, here's a confession. I've always liked Roth. He speaks to me, a New York Jewish child of the Fifties, in a way no other author does. In his books I find my family, friends, and emotions. I can't put these books down. Well, most of them, at least.

And what has become increasingly clear to me is that Roth also loves the right things. His parents, his relatives, his hometown. His baseball and his country. Perhaps we should describe what he loves as the Eternal Things, although Roth is too much a product of his time and place to use that term. So, rest easy, Zuck—I think Roth really likes this book of yours.

And if you fellows are in touch these days here's a thought to mull over together. Perhaps, guys, that which you both love is a reflection of a deeper Love which embraces, obligates, and in the end judges us all. Just something to think about as we all get on in years. □

Tex-Mex Mess

JAMES BOWMAN

WHATEVER strain of gargantuan vanity persuaded Michael Lind to oblige posterity and the world of letters with a retelling of the story of the Alamo in 6,006 lines of rhyme royal is worthy of some considerable respect; his poetry, alas, is not. In fact, the only interesting thing about it is the question it raises: How is it possible for someone almost entirely lacking in poetic talent or taste

Mr. Bowman is American Editor for the Times Literary Supplement.

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to style himself a latter-day Homer without rebuke from the culture at large? Then again, why not? What does the culture at large know of epic verse anyway? Mr. Lind might as well claim to be writing pastorals or odes or satires or haiku, for all that anyone but a few specialists knows to the contrary.

Still, we as a culture have a sort of nodding acquaintance with Homer and Virgil and Milton. They are among the dead-white-male survey-course celebrities whose names, unlike their works, still command a certain prestige among those who claim to be educated. Mr. Lind, who has read widely in epic, and always without understanding, relies heavily on such superficiality. His essay "On Epic," included in this volume, reads like *How to Bluff Your Way in Literary History*. But, amusing as it might be to catalogue the errors and stupidities of this comic farrago of ignorance dressed up as knowledge, the poetry itself is even richer in examples of comic awfulness.

I skip over his inconsistent rhyming practice, even though in the first four pages we find him rhyming *dust* with *husk*, *foes* with *us*, *lens* with *violence*, *within* with *men*, *snarls* with *curls*, *groan* with *gone*, *France* with *lands*, *prod* with *shot*. It is true that assonantal or consonantal half-rhymes are common in present-day poetry, but Lind sprinkles them

The Alamo: An Epic, by Michael Lind (Houghton Mifflin, 352 pp., $25)

in amongst the full rhymes with no apparent logic or system and in defiance of the definiteness of statement called for by an epic celebration of heroism. Nor will I go into detail about the frequent lapses of his iambic pentameter into arrhythmia, the hypermetrical syllables and broken lines, even the torture to which he subjects idiomatic English diction in order to arrive at some feeble rhyme or imperfectly rhythmic line.

Any one of these things could, in some circumstances, be justified, but all of them together create an indelible impression of amateurishness. To choose a passage at random:

Three times Jane had been widowed—
when her James
had fallen to a jailer's musket shot
in Mexico, when John Austin
fell to flames
of fever a few years back, having
fought

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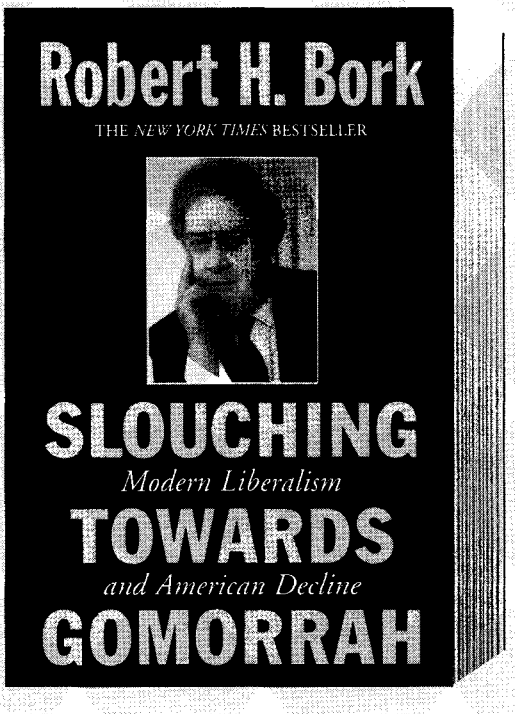

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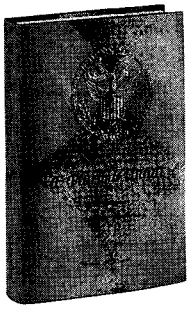

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at Fort Velasco in the war that bought
the captive Travis freedom; and now
when
the foe had slain the last triumvir, Ben.

The rhythm of the first line could easily have been made more regular by a small change in the word order ("Three times had Jane . . ." instead of "Three times Jane had . . ."), and the three accents followed by two unaccented syllables are typical of the rhythmic chasms that are always opening at our feet. The third line, for instance, after a regular start, suddenly shifts, after the middle, pyrrhic foot, to trochees, and leads into another roller-coaster ride, in the fourth line, from pyrrhic foot to spondee.

Such irregularities are as tasteless and unnecessary as the comic alliteration "Fell to flames of fever" meaning nothing but "died of fever." The artifice by which he manages a rhyme with "James" should take more pains to disguise itself. Likewise, "in the war that bought the captive Travis freedom" is a cumbersome periphrasis, obviously for the sake of rhyming "bought" with "fought." Nor has the misuse of English vocabulary always a poetic purpose, as when he refers to three companions in arms (or, since it is unclear if we are to take Mrs. Long's triple widowing literally or not, is it three husbands?) as "triumvirs." Such shockingly bad writing often produces a comic effect, as when, at the end of Book Five, Mr. Lind has Travis returning from a nighttime walk by the river "guided by moonshine."

Lind appears to imagine that The Alamo *will be read and studied by schoolchildren hundreds of years hence.*

Such moments make all the more sad and embarrassing Lind's implicit claim to a place among the poetic immortals. He appears to imagine that, like Shakespeare's works, *The Alamo* will be read and studied by schoolchildren hundreds of years hence. Listing a number of subjects for American epics from the "heroic" age of American history before the Civil War, he notes that "these subjects, until now, have not attracted American poets of the first rank." How to break it to him? Mr. Lind, you're not of the first rank. Nor even the second or the third. But kudos for your unfulfilled desire to bring back the heroic. □

FILM

Mourning Becomes Catching

JOHN SIMON

THE etiology of unearned success is neither simple nor uninteresting, and it deserves greater attention than it gets. Consider, for example, ***The Designated Mourner*** and its author, Wallace Shawn. A small, chubby fellow with an assertive fringe of hair and an understatedly porcine countenance, Shawn owes his status to a number of extracurricular circumstances.

First, he is the son of William Shawn, the longtime editor of *The New Yorker*, a magazine that anybody who is anybody reads, wants to be published in, or hopes for good reviews from. Rightly or wrongly, appreciation of Wallace—or Wally, as people call him—was perceived as a stepping-stone to that magazine. Yet those in the know also realized that, in rebellion against his father, Wally had become a bohemian and, it seems, self-supporting, which naturally enhanced his moral stature. Then, for his movie *Manhattan*, Woody Allen needed a sight gag: he had to find an actor unsightlier than himself. When the legendary ex-husband of the Diane Keaton character of whom the Woody character was madly jealous turned out to be Wally Shawn, laughter exploded.

There was an equally useful obverse side to this: people felt pity for the grotesque gnome and responded sympathetically whenever he appeared in bit parts, usually as a waiter or such. At the same time, Shawn started writing plays, consistently feeble and frequently obscene. Thus *Marie and Bruce*, in which the one joke was that the eponymous spouses hurled blue streaks of obscenity and scatology at each other. Shawn's other main theme was war on bourgeois America, possibly identifiable as attacks on his father, and climaxing in the pro-fascist *Aunt Dan and Lemon*. Barely a *succès d'estime* in New York, this was a hit in London, where American self-hatred is always a welcome excuse for a gloat-fest.

Shawn also made a very modest splash in two bigger movie roles: in *My Dinner with André*, which he co-wrote with André Gregory, who co-starred; and in *Vanya on 42nd Street*, which Gregory in a manner co-directed with Louis Malle, the director of *André*. Both were art-house films of limited appeal, but they enhanced Shawn's standing among pseudo-intellectuals, who are conveniently more numerous and clamorous than the genuine article.

In *My Dinner with André*, the bohemian Wally accepts a posh dinner invitation from the affluent André, each playing himself. They talk about their life experiences seemingly spontaneously, but actually from miles of edited tape. Still, the effect is that of two thoughtful, articulate types freely opining about, and animadverting on, life and art. Presented with a passable facsimile of sophisticated conversation, less verbal viewers were suitably impressed.

Vanya on 42nd Street was Malle's filmed version of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*, as rehearsed off and on in various New York locations by a group of convivial actors between other engagements, and directed by Gregory. It was shot in a disused theater, with Shawn giving a dreadful performance as a Vanya so puny, puling, and piddling as to render inevitable Yelyena's lack of response to his attraction, and turn poignance into anticlimax.

Meanwhile Shawn had also contrived a dramatic monologue, *The Fever* (1991), which he performed in various venues, mostly people's living rooms. In it, the narrator-protagonist experiences from his hotel room a revolution in an unnamed country, and, once again, social discontent and personal grudge fuse into an anti-bourgeois screed (or

Mr. Simon is NR*'s film critic.*

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screech). This one caught even some of the Pavlovianly pro-Shawn critics short on saliva.

And now we have *The Designated Mourner*, first performed as a play at Britain's Royal National Theatre, and marking Mike Nichols's debut as a dramatic actor. England was not undivided in its assent to this intertwining of three monologues, with only the merest smidgen of direct exchange among the trio seated at a table, but Nichols's performance was panegyrized in unison. This even after it was revealed that he was reading off a teleprompter hidden behind a pile of books. Why not, though? Nichols's background as a stand-up improvisational comic enabled him to sound chattily complicitous, and refusing to memorize Shawn's lucubrations shows, at any rate, some judgment.

David Hare's movie version is simply the photographed nonplay. There is a striking, spangled-looking wall behind the three characters seated not too close together at a long, narrow table (design by the dependable Bob Crawley), and Oliver Stapleton's cinematography fluctuates between orange quasi-firelight for the present, and ghostly slate blue for the past. I suffered through roughly half of this 95-minute talkathon; the rest, I read from the prestigiously published text by Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.

Here we have Jack, a glib pseudo-intellectual; Judy, his more delicate wife; and Howard, her father, a revolutionary prosaist turned poet in his mature years. The helpful stage directions read in toto: "Jack is older than Judy. Howard is older than Jack." The piece concerns Jack and Judy's uneasy marriage, with the jealous Howard as a *terzo incomodo*. Revolution breaks out, Howard and Judy are executed, but Jack the turncoat is spared. He continues as a mass journalist, and enjoys the single life, especially sitting on a park bench.

The writing has two principal modes. First, the philosophical, as when the TV-watching Jack muses:

> Well, at some point we have to draw some distinctions—don't we? I mean, pardon me, but shouldn't there be some distinction drawn between the things we say, the lies, the "I like poetry," "I like Rembrandt" on the one hand—and I mean, of course it's important to say those things, because after all if you don't say them then you become simply a zoo animal, you become an empty *thing*, you're nothing more then really than a large balloon with a mouth, genitals, paws, and an a--hole, a nice great big one—but still they're lies, they *are* lies—and then on the other hand things that are true, like "I'm watching this very nice screen right now, I'm watching it and enjoying it"?

Note that this dialectical profundity is couched in an unwieldy sentence of stumbling syntax meant to seem realistic, but merely stretching a vacuous and vapid play into unconscionable verbosity.

Second, the titillating mode.

> One morning in my new apartment I did something funny—at least I thought it was funny. I put a book of poetry in the bathtub, and urinated on it. An interesting experiment. Then I left it in the tub, and then, later, when I needed to s------I hadn't *planned* this, it just came to me as an idea—instead of s------- in the toilet, I s--- on the book. Just to see, you know, if it *could* be done. And apparently it was possible, despite what anyone might have told me. So, like a scientist, I noted in my diary that night. "Yes, the experiment has been a complete success."

Note the reliance on italics, a favorite Shawnian trick, like the frequent "ha ha ha"s littering the text.

Wallace Shawn is not your ordinary ass, but 'a nice great big one.'

If you ask why I go on at such length, the answer is that besides Nichols, the prominent Miranda Richardson and David de Keyser participate in this charade, which has been glowingly endorsed by high and low, though not, to be sure, unanimously. Wallace Shawn is not your ordinary ass, but "a nice great big one," and feted to boot.

■ Luc Besson's ***The Fifth Element*** cost a hundred million bucks, three-quarters footed by Gaumont, the rest by Sony, making it Europe's most expensive film. It is a cinematic comic strip about the twenty-third century, when a dread prophecy from 1914 by unsightly but benevolent extraterrestrials comes true. They warned that the four classical elements must combine with the fifth, love, to defeat evil invaders who look like two-footed pig-dogs, heavily armed, but shooting remarkably poorly. There is also a villainous earthling, Zorg, played ludicrously by Gary Oldman, and an extramundane, genetically engineered redeemer, Leeloo, who arrives on Earth naked but is promptly bedizened in a few suggestive white bandages (bondage?), and who has orange hair with blond roots—punk chic.

Everyone chases after a box containing four stones that, for some reason, are the four elements. Earth's champion is Korben Dallas (Bruce Willis), a New York cabbie in whose flying taxi Leeloo happens to alight. The two are to retrieve the box at a surreal resort hotel where a freakish female singer . . . but why bother? The script (by Besson and Robert Mark Kamen) makes no more sense than the motley cast of mostly weirdos and creeps. However, this is not about sense, but about a) futuristic gizmos, b) computer effects, c) outlandish costumes by the high priest of outlandishness, Jean-Paul Gaultier, and d) Bruce Willis and the model Milla Jovovich (Leeloo) carrying on. Chastely, though, so as not to exclude the kiddies, at whom this staggering expenditure is chiefly and stultifyingly aimed. □

SOUND ON DISC

Serious Music

RALPH DE TOLEDANO

IN 1947 the *Esquire Jazz Book* published what was considered a momentous debate between Gene Krupa, Benny Goodman's powerhouse drummer, and Leonard Bernstein, a then to-be conductor of "serious music": "Has Jazz Influenced the Symphony?" Krupa said no; Bernstein said yes—and in their arguments both of them were wrong. The answer, of course, is yes and no. Symphonic composers have attempted to reach out from

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the sterility of contemporary music. And conservatory-trained musicians have invaded the jazz field, with good results and, alas, Wynton Marsalis. Bebop came into being when Dizzy Gillespie and a group of jazz musicians, crowding into a booth at the old 52nd Street Commodore Music Shop, came across Stravinsky's *Le sacre du printemps,* and went wild. Fats Waller played Bach on the organ, and Alex Wilder brought the harpsichord and the oboe into small-band jazz.

The debate persists, and it has led to an interesting experiment. Chick Corea, a solid jazz pianist, and Bobby McFerrin, a jazz vocalist turned symphonic conductor, decided to put a new spin on Wolfgang Amadeus. They recorded two Mozart piano concertos with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra—No. 20 in D Minor and No. 23 in A major (Sony SK 6201). Their "innovation" consisted in adding a soi-disant Prelude to the concertos in which McFerrin scatted and Corea noodled—and, in the cadenzas, improvising as Beethoven did when playing a Mozart piano concerto. The orchestra stays with the score—though Corea's improvisations seem to bury a few diminished thirds and sevenths. Orchestrally, they are good Mozart, with perhaps a little more drive than you will usually hear in the concert hall.

Conservatory-trained musicians have invaded jazz, with good results and, alas, Wynton Marsalis.

■ There is more traditional Mozart in a recording of his five violin concertos by Franz Peter Zimmerman, with the Württemberg Chamber Orchestra conducted by Jorge Faerber (EMI 5 69355). The young Mozart, it is usually forgotten, was as much at home with a violin under his chin as seated at the piano, and he put his joy in the instrument into these much-recorded concertos. I have always voted for Isaac Stern's renditions, recorded for LP and re-mixed on CD, for their elegant artistry, and for the conducting of George Szell and Alexander Schneider (CBS M2K 42494). But there is much to be said for the Zimmerman/Faerber. The balance between orchestra and soloist is keener, the sound is more articulated, and Zimmerman's lighter tone dances nimbly.

■ Since the electrifying Roger Norrington recording of the *Symphonie Fantastique*, there has been little significant production of Berlioz's works. Comes now a new recording of the uncharacteristically gentle *L'Enfance du Christ* with soloists Victoria de los Angeles and Nicolai Gedda, and Carlo Maria Giulini conducting the Chicago Symphony (EMI 568586). There are passages in the score which have the spacelessness of plain chant. *L'Enfance* is ideally suited to the finely delineated singing of Victoria de los Angeles, who with her Spanish *timbre* is often reminiscent of Lucrezia Bori. There have been other recordings, notably Colin Davis's for London, which includes a number of seldom-heard Berlioz compositions, such as *La Mort de Cléopâtre* and *Sara la Baigneuse*. The Giulini is a superior and more evocative traversal, and it includes significant extracts from the Berlioz *Roméo et Juliette.*

■ From time to time a record remarkably different from the usual output finds its way onto the lists. Such a one, in the 1930s, brought us La Niña de los Peines singing the *cante hondo*—the seldom-heard deep song which goes far beyond *flamenco* to reach into the folk soul of Spain—from a war-torn Madrid, in which the performance is interrupted by a power failure. *Tears of Lisbon* is another one, bringing together the *villancico* of Portugal with the *fado*, the urban blues of western Iberia—the Renaissance polyphony by Paul Nevel and the Huelgas Ensemble and the contemporary song of Beatriz da Conceiçao and António Rocha, accompanied by the long-necked *guitarra portuguesa* and the standard guitar (Sony SK62256). The centuries disappear as the formal *villancico* and the poetically improvised *fado* fold together in that perpetual Portuguese sadness and nostalgia, evocative also of the plaintive romances of fifteenth-century Spain, which my mother sang to us. This is not only an unusual record but one full of loveliness—and one whose sorrows break through in counterpoint to fulfillment.

■ I cannot be as enthusiastic about *Johnny Costa Plays Johnny Mercer* (Chiaroscuro CR(D) 341). For one thing, Mercer wrote lyrics, not music, and what you are presumably hearing is Costa playing Arlen, Kern, Carmichael, etc. That would be fair enough, except that try as you may, you never get to hear "Tangerine" or "Blues in the Night" or "Skylark" or any of the others, but only Costa's distant improvisations on their chordal structure. It is elegant improvisation, but a solo jazz pianist should give you the melody at the beginning and get back to it at the end. Only in "Autumn Leaves" do you get a hint of the melodic take-off. □

Mr. Toledano is the author of Frontiers of Jazz *and many other books.*

BOOKS IN BRIEF

In the Lion's Den, by Nina Shea (Broadman & Holman, 800-251-3225, 126 pp., $8.99)

OF all the abuses of human rights afflicting a turbulent world, one of the most scandalous is the persecution of Christians. It is scandalous not only because of its shocking extent—comprehensively and eloquently documented in this book—but also because it has so long escaped attention in our media and even in our government. Undoubtedly there is a double standard at work—as if Christianity, so long a dominant force in the world, were not entitled to the same freedom as other faiths. Now, finally, attention *is* being paid to the arrests, imprisonment, torture, and other abuses to which millions of Christian believers are subjected in a host of countries. Miss Shea identifies 11 countries where abuses are particularly serious—China, North Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cuba, Nigeria, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Egypt. As the list indicates, Communism and extremist Islam are the worst offenders. One of those most responsible for bringing the issue to Americans' attention is Nina Shea herself, director of the Puebla Institute program of Freedom House. I should declare my interest—I am a Trustee of Freedom House—but the book speaks for itself. —PETER W. RODMAN

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RECTOR

(Continued from page 20)

programs divided by hours worked) would be nowhere near $4.75. It would average about $13 per hour and in many cases would exceed $25. The deliberate intent of this policy is to cripple mandatory community-service work, which, as we have seen, is the motor that drives dependency reduction. It is a blatant effort to preserve the status quo by banning successful reform.

President Clinton's hypocritical maneuver should surprise no one. For decades liberals have fought relentlessly to prohibit all effective work programs. Indeed, twenty years ago another welfare "reformer," Jimmy Carter, expelled Utah from the AFDC program for, you guessed it, making recipients work for benefits. Despite elaborate obfuscation, not much has changed since.

If Mr. Clinton has his way, serious workfare will be emasculated, and Wisconsin's example, like Utah's before it, will be largely forgotten. Within a few years the liberal establishment will return to its mantra: broad economic factors make vast welfare caseloads inevitable; it may be possible to cut dependency at the margin, but only if we are willing to make bold investments in new programs, and so on.

The good news is that Congress can easily overturn Mr. Clinton's proposed regulations through new legislation, preferably attached to the overall budget act. But whether the current timid Congress will have the will to do this remains in doubt.

Meanwhile, back in Wisconsin, the AFDC caseload continues to drop by 3 per cent per month. If Wisconsin's polices are ever adopted by the rest of the nation, taxpayers and recipients will both be huge winners—for dependency is good for neither. □

SIEFF

(Continued from page 25)

rise of China as a supreme geopolitical challenge that America and Europe would have to face in the early twenty-first century. This was a view widely shared by other American participants.

However, Sir Charles Powell, who was top foreign-policy advisor to Prime Minister Thatcher, took a cooler tone. He argued that to treat China as a potentially hostile disrupter of the international system was to risk making a self-fulfilling prophecy. "One shouldn't be too scaremongering about China," he chided, adding that "the one thing the Chinese really understand is tradeoff."

Others argued that it was especially premature to worry about China when the political stability of Russia following the eventual departure of President Boris Yeltsin was still so problematical.

"Russia is still too big for Europe," concluded Josef Joffe. "It is a country without fixed borders. It is a country that is trying to reconstitute its old borders in various ways. There is nothing in Russian history that reveals the roots of democratic and free-market traditions. Russia still has to be on probation."

Speakers agreed it was essential—and not always easy—to manage trade issues between North America and the European Union. However, Margarita Mathiopoulos, the lovely and formidably able vice president of the Nord Deutsche Landsbank, noted that even in this knotty area, the problems among the Atlantic partners were essentially peripheral rather than structural. "We have a very good marriage with some normal disagreements," she said. While the economic and cultural rows across the ocean existed, they had to be seen in perspective. In Germany, "we lost the Soviet threat and we found a new enemy: scientology," she quips.

Furthermore, the conference served to maintain and build on the momentum of Prague 1996, no small matter. For, as one conference participant, the ever-enthusiastic Douglas Feith, a former Reagan Administration official, noted, the fate of the world is forged through friendships and personal identifications and ties. The young Winston Churchill, used to being ignored and derided by his father, visited New York for the first time a hundred years ago and found friendship, encouragement, and respect from an otherwise-forgotten Tammany Hall politician named Bourke Cochran. From such an unlikely seed did Churchill's lifelong affinity for America, and the transatlantic alliance that saved our civilization, spring.

The participants at Phoenix had, alas, little time to party—future conference planners, please take note—but they appear to have had a splendid time nevertheless. That may well be the most important success of all from the vantage of decades to come and crises as yet unimagined. For, as the Book of Malachi notes, "They that feared the Lord spoke often one to another." □

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TRANS-O-GRAM / Siegfried R. Reiner

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	167 U	168 D	169 N		170 A	171 B	172 V	173 K	174 J	175 Q		176 V	177M	178 F	179 K	180 E	181 B	182 A			

DEFINITIONS

A. Working man's country club (2 words) — 87 53 170 119 92 132 35 45 157 114 73 / 182

B. King Arthur's sire — 128 8 51 106 181 55 142 91 163 69 17 / 70 171 40

C. Ben Hur's wheels — 19 33 134 74 68 85 101

D. He routed the French at Agincourt (3 words) — 66 25 18 56 115 29 168 38 10 149 166 / 86 2

E. Doles out — 118 26 54 131 160 113 14 180 83 48

F. Bayreuth Birgit — 109 5 156 13 178 9 123

G. Feigns — 155 117 31 159 81 154 133

H. Pinched — 75 46 107 158 52 89

I. English weight measure — 164 79 122 22 108

J. Fabled city of gold (2 words) — 90 120 136 63 4 27 174 162

K. South African Bantu region (Basutoland) — 173 88 124 36 179 7 21

L. Go after — 64 111 127 148 137

M. Idiom of Bishop Ulfila's Bible — 6 61 49 24 177 121

N. Line formed by rivers separating Germany from Poland (hyph.) — 30 152 12 28 112 34 126 59 139 169

O. Irritations — 72 151 98 43 16 103 116 84 58

P. Whirlpools — 77 42 105 95 146 102

Q. Offers impediment — 11 97 150 60 175 23 80

R. Tidy — 104 3 153 96

S. Frankish kings brought low by Pepin's treachery — 76 141 147 165 37 130 62 44 99 138 135 / 15

T. Protracts — 93 145 125 67 143 110 100

U. Spiro Agnew derided "nabobs" for their tendency to do this — 78 82 167 50 20 39

V. How long the Alamo's defenders held out (4 words) — 129 71 32 176 144 140 161 65 1 57 172 / 41 47 94

DIRECTIONS

The object of TRANS-O-GRAM is to fill in the puzzle diagram by guessing the words from their definitions, and transferring each letter of the guessed word to the correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. When the diagram is filled in it will spell out a quotation from some published work (reading normally from left to right, black boxes indicating the ends of words); also, when the words have all been filled in above, their initial letters will spell out the author and title of the quoted work. The acrostic feature, and the relative word-lengths in the diagram, will assist in the solution. Spelling and definitions on the authority of *Webster's Deluxe Unabridged Dictionary*, Second Edition.

Solution to April 21 Trans-O-Gram. LINCOLN: *Equality of the Slave*: "But in the right to eat the bread, without the leave of anybody else, which his own hand earns, he is my equal and the equal of Judge Douglass, and the equal of every living man."

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ON THE RIGHT / Wm. F. Buckley Jr.

The Eternal Problem In Abortion Debate

NEW YORK, MAY 16

The partial-birth abortion battle vividly reinforces the axiom that fruitful debate is not possible unless there is common ground. Two modes of argument drive the abortion lobby nuts. The first is any analogy to slavery; the second, frame-by-frame pictorializations of what partial-birth abortion is.

On the first point, it is worth reflecting that the *Dred Scott* decision of 1857 asserted that slaves were quite simply property, and that for that reason the Missouri Compromise, which restricted slave traffic outside the Union, was unconstitutional. The reasoning of the Supreme Court isn't easy to confute. If a slave were property—like, say, a truck—then the owner could take it where he chose.

So how was the argument transcended? By crystallizing pressure to the effect that if someone had eyes, ears, nose, speech, feelings, and a brain, you had to find some other taxonomic classification for it . . . him . . . than vegetable/mineral. He was an "animal," to be sure. But in the sense also that Socrates and Abraham Lincoln were animals. It was empirical verification, the evidence of our senses, that shattered the abstract reasoning of the Court majority. It is an effort of that kind that right-to-life advocates make when they point not to a big black slave, but to a tiny gestating black/white/yellow man or woman.

It was in order to make such a demonstration that Sen. Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania insisted, last Wednesday, on illustrating exactly what it is that a physician does in a partial-birth abortion. He "suctions the brains out of the baby. That causes the head to collapse and then the baby is delivered." There were moans on the Senate floor when Sen. Santorum began unpacking those large photographs depicting the medical "procedure."

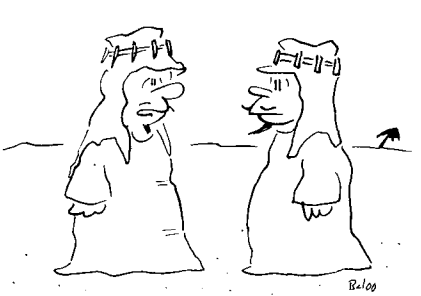
Now even when John thinks a slave is property and Jim thinks he is a human being, there can be political bargaining, as when the states came up first with the Missouri Compromise, then with the Kansas–Nebraska Act. There was compromise, even though there wasn't any philosophical middle ground. It simply meant that John would be left partly satisfied, Jim partly satisfied. The counterpart is Tom Daschle, Democratic senator from South Dakota, and Santorum. Daschle, slightly modifying the totalist language of Sens. Boxer and Feinstein (they're pretty well satisfied with things as they are), says, Let's do this: No third-trimester abortions of viable fetuses provided the mother's health is not in jeopardy.

Santorum counters that there is never, ever, anywhere a situation in which the mother's physical health is assured by killing the fetus; and the American Medical Association more or less confirms this.

So that the issue then turns on mental health. And what that adds up to is simply a continuation of existing arrangements. If Jane decides she doesn't want to carry the 7-month-old fetus to term, she tells the doc, who obligingly confirms that Jane will suffer grievous mental anguish if she isn't permitted the abortion.

Santorum regards the viable fetus as something other, merely, than a tomato. What confirms the absence of common rational ground is the question, If a tomato is all that it is, why should Sen. Daschle trouble to insist that late-term abortions be justified by real (or imagined) threats to the mother's life?

The renowned scholar/commentator Michael Novak remarked recently in these pages that he has never understood why laissez-faire abortion advocates trouble to say, as most of them do, that they regret abortions but favor the right to have them. Mr. Novak's puzzlement is intellectually arresting even if the psychological answer to his question remains obvious. It is akin to that creeping sensation, in the mind and heart of many slave owners, that, in fact, a slave simply *had* to be something more merely than a piece of property. No doubt many women who have abortions manage to subdue psychological reservations about what they sanction.



"Of course I'm worn out—if you add it all up, I've been married 719 years!"

But many women do not. And most legislators say—either because their senses excite such sentiments, or because they feel that the public sensibility is assuaged by affecting to harbor such sentiments—that abortions are "unfortunate," or whatever is the term used by such as Messrs. Cuomo, Dodd, and Weld. Totalist abortion enthusiasts are perhaps correct to worry about security risks out there. If one of their number explores fully his reservations, who knows what would come next. *Uncle Tom's Lost Baby*, by Mario Cuomo? □

U.S. vs. Flinn?

NEW YORK, MAY 20

When probing any situation involving the military, it pays to remember the bureaucracy. The Pentagon makes Congress sound like an assembly of solipsists. The case of First Lieutenant Kelly Flinn is very much in point. She is the lady whose plight was publicized by *60 Minutes*, where Morley Safer waxed wroth over the prospect that Lt. Flinn would be court-martialed.

What is distinctive about Lt. Flinn is that she is a female B-52 bomber pilot, the only such in the Air Force. Moreover, she has been something of a pinup figure because she is blonde and pretty and articulate. Court-martial Kelly? For what? Well, for adultery and for lying about it.

Morley Safer marvelously captures the attitude of the U.S. intelligentsia in these matters. When he emitted the words, "court-martialed for adultery," his face concatenated into amusement, indignation, incredulity, and condescension; all at once. If his face had been transcribed into words by one of those IBM machines that beat Kasparov, it would have said, "General, you're not really going to tell me, a grown-up American, and my audience of 20 million sophisticated citizens of this century that you would even *consider* court-martialing this important symbol of female upward mobility for a peccadillo of the kind only our dear grandmothers would be offended by?"

Then Safer said to the general, "Do you know of any *male* officers who have gotten away with adultery without facing court-martial?" That was of course an impossible question. What was the general supposed to say? "Well yes, there was Henry—Henry Alvarez, if you want his full name. I know damn well he, er, did it, and he's flying high, Lt. Commander, 38th Squadron. . . ." All that the general could do was say rather formally that those were the rules in the Air Force. Mr. Safer came back one more time, asking did he know of any men who

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had got off, and even a third time, to no avail.

As a matter of fact, the data tell us that the Air Force has been cracking down on adultery, and presumably on other offenses against its code of behavior. In 1987, 16 members of the Air Force were court-martialed for adultery; in 1996, 67. In 1994, 23 requested a general discharge in lieu of a court-martial and 10 of those requests were granted. In 1996, 38 made the request, and only 7 such requests were granted. That would appear to be a tightening up of the code, which of course brings up the question, Ought the code to be there in the first place? That is, the code against adultery—the code against lying is different, one is eased into concluding.

We have here a further complication. After being caught in the adultery, Lt. Flinn lied about it. This isn't unnatural behavior, but the Air Force doesn't approve of lying, and specifies a court-martial for those who do so on important matters. The complication bears directly on the news that the Secretary of the Air Force, Dr. Sheila Widnall, turned against the expedient that Lt. Flinn proposed, namely an honorable discharge in exchange for her resignation. To conclude that deal with Lt. Flinn would have set a precedent: Air Force record keepers couldn't come up with a single instance of a member's being permitted an *honorable* discharge as a device for derailing a scheduled court-martial. And although the point is not made explicitly, the whole idea of Lt. Flinn as a national symbol is her triumph in a man's world. It would hardly enhance that myth if important rules were changed because, after all, she is only a woman.

So what then? "Then we will proceed to court-martial," said Lt. Flinn. But the court-martial would seem to be open and shut, if its only job is to discover whether Lt. Flinn had engaged in adultery and lied about it, since she told Morley Safer and 20 million other Americans that that exactly was what she had done and lied about. What might her defense plead?

In her particular case, there is the factor of the incubus. The married man she consorted with was, we gather, the seducer. Indeed, after a bit he threw her away, and the question even arises whether she knew that her lover was married. That would seem to mitigate the charge; sort of. On the matter of the lie, one supposes it cannot be made to go away, but perhaps the military tribunal would conclude that since the adultery charge had been debilitated, the corollary offense of lying about it could reasonably be forgiven.

But Morley & Company will not rest content unless the members of the military tribunal stalk out of the room declaring that they will not be parties to a prosecution under a medieval code that considers adultery a problem. This is, after all, a modern army, and we should have modern behavior codes to go with it. Right? □

Rent Control, One More Time

NEW YORK, MAY 13

It is a pity that John Cardinal O'Connor involved himself in the dispute over rent control in New York City. When a man of God draws explicit attention to the auspices under which he speaks (God's), the listener expects to hear heavy moral pronouncements; and, on Sunday, we did so. The cardinal, speaking a) in St. Patrick's Cathedral b) on a subject which he had several days before advertised as his agenda, c) proceeded to describe his position using great moral brushstrokes. He spoke of human rights and moral imperatives.

The difficulty here is obvious. If you elevate your view of things high enough to exclude any recognition of distracting particularities, you can talk about anything in the world in the airborne language of human rights and moral requirements. What is your view of an increase in the discount rate, Your Eminence? What is your view on aid to Chechnya? On Star Wars?

The cardinal's postulate is that inasmuch as human beings have to live, they have a human right to a place to live in. To this right needs to be added a "moral imperative," which takes into account the attenuation of your human right by such burdens as having to live far away from where you work, which means boring and expensive commutation and protracted separation from the home.

All this would appear to be saying that existing laws shouldn't be changed, with perhaps the exception that the law denying rent protection to those New Yorkers who earn more than $250,000 per year should be sharpened to deny coverage to those who earn $175,000 per year. But to avoid giving the impression that his thought begets only static analysis, the cardinal came out for appointing—yes, a commission to consider it all again. "With all due respect to His Eminence, the issue has been studied over and over, and every reputable study has concluded with the need to abolish rent regulations," commented Stephen Mangione, speaking for the Rent Stabilization Association.

On the question of the number of years the rent-control business has been studied, I forward a conclusion reached after one very extensive study: "Rent controls, a twenty-year-old relic of the war emergency, should gradually be eliminated. Precipitate abandonment of controls would, of course, entail disastrous consequences for many tenants. The Rent and Rehabilitation Administration should be required to present to the City Council next April—when current rent controls are due for renewal—a staged program looking forward to the total elimination of controls over a five-year period." That was my position on rent control from the paper published when I ran for mayor of New York in 1965.

We speak of the cardinal's high ground, which allows so many of the anomalies to escape attention. But the basic entablature shouldn't escape notice. If I have the human right to housing, you have a human obligation to provide me with housing. How in a free society do we transact these rights and obligations?

By asking the market to measure the ardency of my desire over against your willingness to appease it. The membrane of the two impulses is the dollar. If, defying the market, the house-seeker requires dwelling for less than the price at which a willing supplier would furnish it, then you have diminished the human right of the supplier to make the best deal for himself, and you have also punished prospective house-dwellers. How? By chasing away capital that might have been used to construct more and cheaper dwellings but that, with Archimedean precision, will now float up to service a buyer's impulse where there are fewer government interferences between the prospective partners in the transaction.

Gov. Pataki has hardly helped, with his offer to go along with a reform that would reduce the income level of the low-rent profiteer to $175,000. "According to that statement," said Dan Margulies, executive director for the Community Housing Improvement Program, "he is looking for lifetime rent laws."

That is correct, Dan. That is exactly what everybody over there is looking for. But it pays to reflect that we have *already* had lifetime rent-control laws. In 1965, when Buckley-for-Mayor proposed a gradual abolition of rent control, the laws were 20 years old. That was 32 years ago, so that the laws have been on the books for 52 years, which is, speaking roughly, a lifetime. If we are seeing the crystallization of a new human right, then perhaps we should be saying that *all* housing is a government responsibility. What then? . . . Remember the one that goes, What happens when the Soviet Union takes over the Sahara Desert? Answer: Nothing, for fifty years. Then there is a shortage of sand. □

(Universal Press Syndicate)

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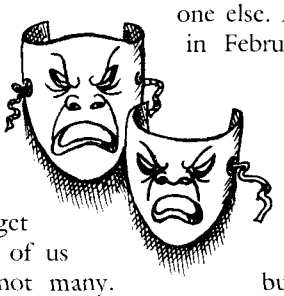
THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER

FLORENCE KING

WHAT do you do when you've got a stalemate on your hands? When you've tried everything and nothing has worked? When patience is depleted and you hear the sizzle of a lit fuse at the base of your skull?

The answer depends upon your brand of conservatism. Most conservatives would pray. I know some of you even pray for me because you've said so in your letters, proving that your faith is above rubies or something. Another kind of conservative would get drunk. This is easy because we don't drink liberals' sissy concoctions; it takes forever to get drunk on wine coolers but we can get there on a few belts. Some of us would hire a lawyer, but not many. Litigation is a liberal's game; a conservative's first instinct—after prayer, of course—is to slug somebody, but I couldn't do that because it's a man's world and I'm but a Southern lady in it. Booze was also out because it works against my fighting instincts. Paradoxically, I'm a happy drunk, prone to love everybody and lead a singalong in "Wait Till the Sun Shines, Nellie." What, then, could I do? There was only one route, so I took it.



"Pedantry in distress" describes my actions at such times. Whenever I'm at the end of my rope, my thought processes zoom in on the problem and ignite a relentless intellectual craving for a succinct articulation of it. Somewhere in this apartment is the perfect quotation; all I have to do is find it. Memory stirs and I see it in my mind's eye. Is it in my quotations notebook where I copy favorite passages from books? Or is it in my ever more apocalyptic files? The search begins.

The quotation I was looking for this time turned up in the file labeled LICK & PROMISE. It's from Rudyard Kipling's observations on America:

"A certain defect runs through everything—workmanship, roads, bridges, contracts, barter and sale and so forth—all inaccurate, all slovenly, all out of plumb and untrue. So far, the immense natural wealth of this land holds this ineptitude up; and the slovenly plenty hides their sins unless you look for them."

My problem concerned a receipt I needed for a tax-deductible purchase made for me in New York by someone else. My efforts to get it started in February and went on for two months. At first I stayed out of it and let my standin pursue the matter with the salesman. At one point the words "The receipt is in the mail" were actually spoken, but of course it never came, and shortly the salesman vanished into the black hole of "sales conference." When he surfaced, the promises began again: the receipt would be mailed in two weeks . . . in ten days . . . next Tuesday . . .

Finally I got fed up and called him myself. "That receipt wasn't mailed to you?" he asked wonderingly. Just then the phone faded out. Not a cut-off sound, just a sudden gentle nothingness that would have appealed to Emily Dickinson. Next, I got a Bell recording saying "Please hang up and dial again." I did, but the salesman didn't answer his page then or the next three times I called. The operator asked me if I wanted his voice mail; I said yes, but then she remembered that he had no voice mail. I asked her for his fax number and faxed him, but he never called or faxed back.

I called three more times, but he wasn't answering his phone, his page, his pager, his cell phone, his car phone, his fax, or his computer. He had no answering machine but he did sell them—why, I wondered, didn't he put one aside for himself?

At last I got him on the phone. I asked him why he had not responded to my fax and he said he never got it; when I told him where I had sent it he said the operator had given me the wrong number. To make a long story short (*NR* couldn't print the best part of the conversation anyhow), I got the receipt three days later. There was only one thing wrong with it: the dot-matrix print-out was so faint that the purchase price was unreadable.

Multiply my experience by the number of Americans who endure something similar every day and it adds up to millions of rides on the Vortex at Kafkaland. The cumulative effect on the national nervous system has given rise to the Stress Industry, but it would be a mistake to think that the how-to-cope books, aerobics classes, breathing workshops, shower massages, and competing brands of indigestion pills will solve anything. When the bookstore clerk can't find *Stop Complaining and Start Living*, when the receptionist at the aerobics center gets the appointments mixed up, when the windows won't open at the breathing school, when the new shower head won't spray, when the sealed bottle of Gutlox is found to contain rat droppings, then we know that Kipling was right.

AMERICAN shiftlessness has worsened since his time. I can think of four reasons why.

World War II instilled a fear of efficiency-as-fascism that joined forces with our blotterlike capacity for taking everything in and getting it all backwards to give us words to live by: "He made the trains run on time" meant that late is good.

Fifties conformity produced a lust for "creativity" (the forerunner of self-esteem) that excused wool-gathering and sloppiness as signs of artistic destiny in children who grew up to be salesmen.

When pop psychology ruled that meticulous people are sexually frustrated, screwing up a simple task proved that you got boompsed regularly.

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According to current idiom, the opposite of a procrastinating slacker is a "control freak." You are looking, so to speak, at one right now. I do everything yesterday, triple-check it, worry about it, and keep files on people who give their jobs a lick and a promise.

I can find anything. □

Miss King is the author of The Florence King Reader *and other books.*

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